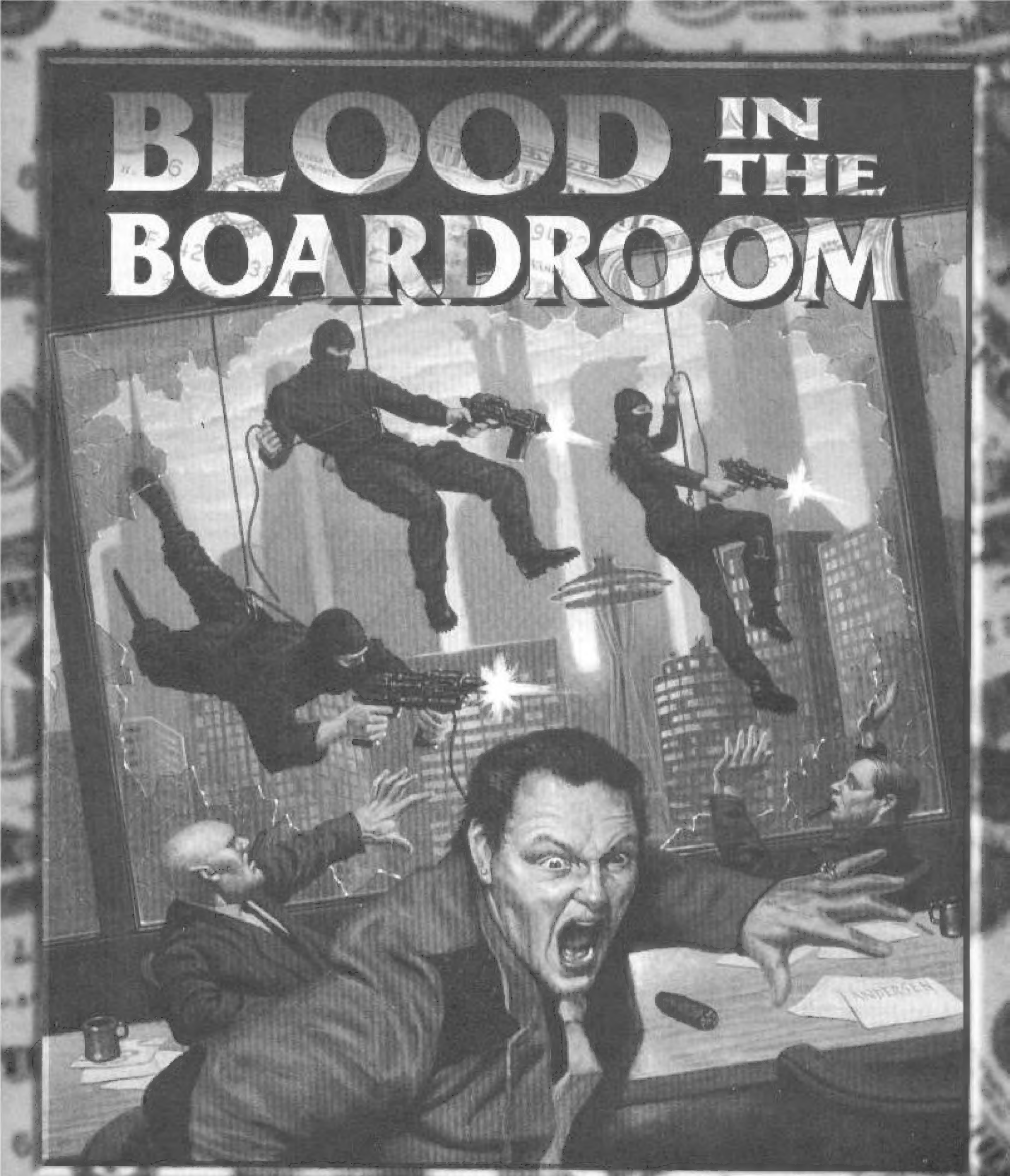
BLOOD IN THE BOARDROOM



• FASA CORPORATION •

CONTENTS

PROLOGUE: PIECES OF A PUZZLE 6
INTRODUCTION 8
Plot Summary 8
How to Use this Book 9
Adventure Frameworks 10
RUNNING BLOOD IN THE BOARDROOM 11
Hooking the Characters 11
Simple Run, Minimal Complications 11
Contacts 11
Security 11
This is Personal 11
Alternate Campaigns 12
Gamemastering the Corporations 14
Divided Loyalties 14
Working for a Faction 14
Research Terrorism 15
The Orphans 16
Story Structures 16
One-Track Mind 16
Jumping the Tracks 17
Freeform Plot Line 17
Novel Plot Line 17
Running Outside Seattle 17
Ending the War 17
Background and Additional Information 18
Timeline of Events 18
TRACK 1: CIVIL WAR 20
There Goes the Neighborhood 20
What's Going Down 22
Fuchi History 22
Matrix Management 23
Where There's a Will 24
Death of a Megacorp 25
The Players 26
Novatech, Inc. 26
Renraku Computer Systems 27
Shiawase Corporation 27
Adventure Frameworks 29
Crash Team 29
Loose Lips Fry Chips 31
Black Operations 32
Adventure Ideas 34
Hostile Takeover 34
A Gift for the Bride 34
Bustin' Out 34
TRACK 2: NECK AND NECK 35
On the Brink 35
What's Going Down 37
Ren:raku History 37
Burning the Candle at Both Ends 38
A Stroke of Genius 39
Miles to Go 40
A Very Bad Year 41
The Players 41
Fuchi Industrial Electronics 41
Renraku Computer Systems 43
Transys Neuronet 44
Adventure Frameworks 44
... This Is Your Brain on Otaku 44
Prove It to Me 46
What Does a Ten-Thousand-Year-Old Dragon Get? 48
This Hurts Me More than It Hurts You 49
Adventure Ideas 50
Unwilling Transfer 50
The Squeeze 51
Public Secrets 51
Transys Neuromess 51
TRACK 3: CROSS PURPOSES 52
Motor City Madness 52
What's Going Down 52
Ares Macrotechnology History 53
Bugs and Dragons 53
Double Cross 56
Cross Applied Technologies History 57
The Players 58
Ares Macrotechnology 58
Cross Applied Technologies, Inc. 59
Sierra, Inc. 60
Adventure Frameworks 61
Double Crossover 61
Not In my Backyard 62
Knight's Gambit 63
Adventure Ideas 64
Look Before You Leap 64
Return Policy 65
Plague of Angels 66
Green Piece 67
Virtual Funds 67
TRACK 4: OUT OF THE EAST 69
On Location 69
What's Going Down 71
Pacific Prosperity Group History 71
Yamatetsu History 72
The Players 74
Eastern Tiger Corporation 75
Federated Boeing 75
Kwonsham Industries 76
Monobe International 76
Pacific Prosperity Group 76
Pacific Rim Bank and Financial Services Corp. 77
Tan Tien, Inc. 77
Wuxing, Inc. 77
Yakashima Technologies 78
Yamatetsu Corporation 78
Adventure Frameworks 80
The Needle and the Damage Done 80
Mainframed 81
What's in a Name? 84
Adventure Ideas 86
Ancient Chinese Secret, Huh? 86
Truck Stop 87
Mob Clash 87
Tome Raiders 87

BLOOD IN THE BOARDROOM

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Author Dedication

Dedicated to my wife, Renata, who anchors me in this world while I'm writing about different ones. Thanks for fending off the rest of the world for me. O meu coração pertence á você.

Additional Thanks to:

Steve Kenson, for quotes from his **Shadowrun** novel **Technobabel.**

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ShadowLand v3.0

"I have taken all knowledge to be my province."—Francis Bacon

"Humankind cannot bear very much reality."—T. S. Eliot

A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR:

I've seen it all. A year away from the fiftieth anniversary of the Awakening and nothing has settled down. Heck, in my mediocre life-span alone a major North American city has been nuked and walled off; a dragon ran for president of the UCAS and won; said dragon was assassinated and used our little BBS as the forum to drek-over half the world's population; a megacorp expired and three new ones rose like heads on a hydra to take its place; and a metahuman took control of one of the biggest corps in the world. What's weird is that all of this has taken place in the last six years . . . it's as if someone new is in control of our world. It's hard to imagine what else could happen, so now I can die a happy decker.

THE BACK STOCK

The Underworld (The criminal underbelly flayed and exposed)
Target: UCAS (Visit Beantown, Motor City and Bug Central)
Rigger 2 (Don't let the SOTA run you down . . .)
Cyberpirates (Smuggling, pirates and revolution - see how the other half lives)

Go To Complete Library Archives

THE DAILY SPECIAL

Blood In The Boardroom!

That's right, the blood is flowing from the penthouses of those huge arcologies instead of the gutter, but the result is the same—the stench of death, mayhem and nuyen are in the air. This is the place to get the skinny on who's loyal to whom and whose hoop you need to kiss or kick. Information and misinformation is pouring in faster than we can process it. Before you dive into the deep end, check out these downloads.

COMING SOON

Target: Smuggler Havens (The places to visit to dump goods and get a little R&R)
New Seattle (Updated and now coated with our own special sauce!)
The Corporate Download (Everything you need on the corps but were really afraid to ask)

Mags/Vids | Message Boards | Private Rooms | Misc. Topics | Help | Decker House

News

It's 07:25:23

Do You Know

Where You

Meat Body Is

FRIENDS OF FRIENDS

Even our contacts have no idea what the drek is going down. That's right, even Shadowland's vaunted Web of Intrigue™ has crashed and burned. Not only do our contacts not know who's doing what to whom but most are actually worried about their jobs. So, we make this passionate plea—if you have information on the corp war let us know and we'll post everything we got.

Without each other what do we have?

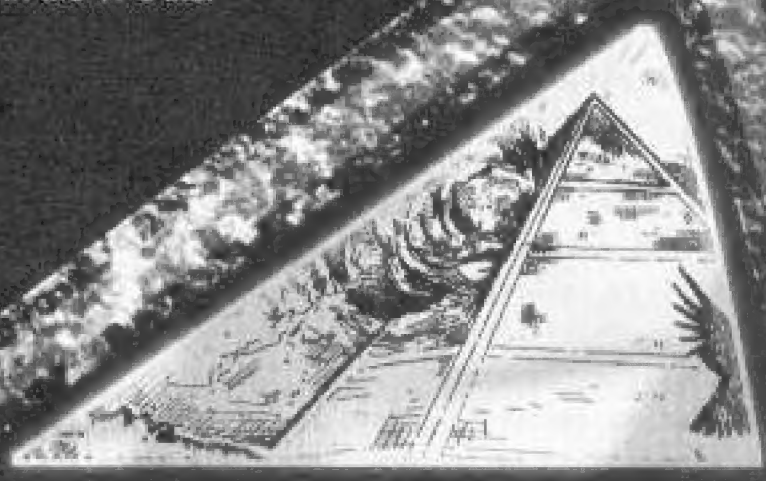
...<Swelling muzak> *I got you babe* ... Click here fast.

KISS AND TELL

We don't usually get into the who's sleeping with whom sweepstakes; we like to leave that to the newsfaxes and other rags. But word is that Nadja Daviar—our hot and sexy UCAS VP—has been seen in DeeCee dining with a young stud (that's what Foxy Roxy calls him, not me). Well, Foxy knows a prime cut of beef when she sees one, but she's hit a brick wall trying to find out who this guy is. Read what Foxy has so far and add your own say to the hunt for the mystery man in the VP's life.

TECHNOSPECTIVE

Say goodbye to the Fifties. Take a look back at the last ten years of our little Awakened world in good, old-fashioned Shadowland style. Check out the movers, the shakers, the freaks and the frauds, plus we got all of your favorite posts, vid-clips, rumors and factoids. We're even keeping D's will online for those of you still trying to win the big dragon lottery. Plus, play our Top Story of 2060 guessing game.



WEIRD STUFF

How's this for weird? A "security malfunction" (Beep Beep Beep—corp jargon alert—everyone get yer wading boots) at Renraku's Seattle arcology left nine shoppers dead, fifteen wounded and the arc closed to the public "while we inspect the systems and mourn those unfortunates who died in this freak accident" (hope you grabbed your hip waders, chummer). What do you have, boyz and grrrls? Let's show them how to inspect that system. Post your results here.

PIECES OF A PUZZLE

15 AUGUST 2059

Jean-Claude Priault could survey the entire world from his office.

His office was not large; compared to the sanctums of the powerful men he dealt with every day, it seemed ridiculously small and cramped. There was enough room for a plain desk, a telecom, a comfortable chair and a few carefully chosen paintings on the wall, but the realities of life on Zurich-Orbital did not allow for unnecessary ornamentation. The view, however, more than compensated for the office's drab décor. Through the single huge viewport that formed his office's exterior wall, Priault watched the Earth turn below him.

He was inwardly pleased at the fact that he could still lose himself in the majesty of Earth, even after all his years in space. The view could never be matched by any skyscraper. It was the view, perhaps, that drew Priault to spend more and more time on Zurich-Orbital and less in his terrestrial offices. His duties, with rare exceptions, could be performed just as easily on Earth as in space; his employer cared little where Priault chose to reside, as long as his goals were accomplished. Without a doubt, life in orbit was considerably less comfortable than the alternative. For the cost of spending a month in his cramped quarters on Zurich-Orbital, Priault could have spent a year in luxury on Earth, though money was not an issue for his employer. Life aboard the space station was a series of compromises, tradeoffs necessary to sustain life in a place where it was never meant to go. Survival required an endless succession of precautions against the unforgiving vacuum of space, against a universe that was unimpressed by the power wielded by men like Priault.

Perhaps that was why he stayed in orbit, Priault thought. Perhaps he needed the sense of perspective that came with the realization that there were forces in the universe more powerful than men, or corporations, or dragons. Perhaps he had simply grown tired of seeing what life on Earth was like, seeing the effects that the decisions made here in orbit had on the average man. From up here, he could still believe that Earth was beautiful. Perhaps he was just getting old.

Asia was spread out below him now, the vastness of China and the Siberian tundra filling his window. Japan was barely visible now, turning slowly over the horizon and out of sight. It was an appropriate backdrop for the call he had to make, and he regretfully admitted to himself that he had delayed long enough. He took a deep breath as he always did before these calls, particularly when he had to break bad news to his employer, and pressed a series of keys on the telecom. There was a delay as the call was put through, routed through a tangle of electronics designed to keep the connection as secure as mankind—and some things beyond mankind—could make it. Then the screen flickered, and Lofwyr answered the call himself.

The great dragon had already assumed his human form, because telepathy does not work well over telecom lines, but he was an intimidating figure nonetheless. Lofwyr's eyes made it clear that he was a being of power, and that his control of the world's most powerful corporation was only a small part of that power. "Hello, Jean-Claude," he said, his voice like liquid amber even over the telecom. "How did things go?"

"Not well, master." Most men couldn't manage the word "master"; it came out sounding either sarcastic or servile. For Priault, addressing Lofwyr as master was like a sergeant calling a general "sir." It was the only word that fit his relationship with Lofwyr, and Priault used it without shame. He would never call another human master, but the dragon was in another class of beings, and Priault knew that acknowledging Lofwyr's superiority did nothing to diminish his own dignity as a human.

"Not well? How so?" Lofwyr asked. The dragon showed no concern, only mild interest. Lofwyr's emotions always appeared mild, except for rage. His rage could shake down Everest.

"The electors have selected Li Feng of Wuxing to replace Hague." For the first time in seventeen years, a new corporation would be represented on the Corporate Court. Wuxing, based in Hong Kong, was the head of a consortium of Pacific Rim companies bent on challenging Japan's dominance of the region's economy. Now that one of their number had reached the Corporate Court, it began to look as though their efforts would be successful. "Ares, Aztechnology and Yamatetsu were in favor of the move, as we suspected; Fuchi's electors also voted for Wuxing, suggesting that they have decided to support the Villiers faction." That decision was probably influenced by the fact that David Hague, the late Fuchi justice whose successor was being elected, had met an untimely death after opposing Richard Villiers in one of Fuchi's internal squabbles, but Priault saw no need to belabor the obvious. "Mitsuhama, Renraku and Shiawase opposed Wuxing, as expected. With our assistance, that should have been enough to keep Wuxing off the Court, but ... something happened during the voting process."

"Such as ... ?" Lofwyr prompted.

Priault took another deep breath. "I suspect that one of our electors voted for Wuxing despite your orders. The vote was close enough that one elector's vote could have made the difference. I spoke to the Court and the electors at length about Wuxing; our representatives knew very well what you wanted, but one of them still betrayed you. And, as I am responsible for all Saeder-Krupp personnel aboard Zurich-Orbital, that means that I have failed you."

"On the contrary, you have done admirably well." Lofwyr's human face creased in a slight smile. "I told you that I wanted you to oppose Feng's appointment to the court; I didn't say that I didn't want him elected."

"Of course, sir." Priault had worked for the dragon too long to be surprised by Lofwyr's machinations, and knew his master too well to ask questions. Lofwyr would explain himself, or not, in his own time.

"Your public and vocal opposition to Wuxing makes the Japanese feel that we will stand as a much-needed ally," Lofwyr began, taking obvious pleasure in a clever plan well executed. "It also ensured that Aztechnology and Ares voted for Wuxing; they believe that anything that is bad for both the Japanese and Saeder-Krupp must necessarily be good for them. Since the other corporations' votes were more or less obvious, it will be clear that one or more of the Saeder-Krupp electors voted against your—and thus my—wishes. This will lead our enemies to suspect dissension within the company, which may lead them to underestimate us. Finally, Wuxing may resent us for resisting their advancement, but they are the newest and weakest member of the Court and thus the least of our concerns at this time.

"I apologize for the deception, Jean-Claude," the dragon concluded, "but you are always at your most eloquent when you honestly believe in what you are saying. You have, as always, done well." Lofwyr's eyes flicked to one side briefly, then back toward Priault. "And now, other business calls. Au revoir, Jean-Claude." With another brief smile and a nod, the screen went blank.

Shaking his head at his master's ingenuity, Priault turned away from the telecom and back toward the window. Japan had vanished over the horizon now; soon Priault's homeland would be coming into view. He thought that he finally knew why he preferred Zurich-Orbital to Earth; with beings like Lofwyr on Earth, it was safer up here ... if not by much.

INTRODUCTION

The **Shadowrun** adventure **Blood in the Boardroom** is dramatically different from most previously published adventures for the **Shadowrun** universe. Like its predecessor, **Mob War!,** rather than providing a single, linear adventure for the player characters to follow, this book describes the results of a series of events—in this case, corporate maneuvers over a roughly two-year period, from late 2057 to early 2060. The outcome of these conflicts radically redraws the corporate map in the world of **Shadowrun.** From the destruction of one megacorp to the rise of three new corporate players, **Blood in the Boardroom** shakes up the status quo enjoyed by the corps for so many years and provides multiple opportunities and new challenges for player characters.

Gamemasters can use the material in this book to run adventures and campaigns in any locale, from Seattle to Vladivostok in the Far East. The material is organized into tracks, one for each of the major plots in which the megacorporate giants become enmeshed. Each track provides a backdrop for the events, describes the major players and their reactions to the events and includes suggestions for gamemasters who wish to slowly introduce the events into their campaigns. **Blood in the Boardroom** also outlines the overall goals and plans of the major players and suggests likely adventures based on the pursuit of those objectives.

The gamemaster can choose to have the player characters follow a single track to its conclusion or allow them to "jump the tracks" from one plot line to another for a tailor-made campaign (see **Jumping the Tracks,** p. 16 in **Running Blood in the Boardroom**). Each track includes at least one fleshed-out adventure framework and several additional adventure ideas that the gamemaster easily can turn into full-fledged adventures using material from this and other **Shadowrun** products, such as **Target: UCAS** or **Cyberpirates.** Gamemasters will also find useful many of the optional rules in the **Shadowrun Companion: Beyond the Shadows** (**SR Companion**), especially the Contacts and Enemies rules on pages 62–75, for adding texture and complexity to the adventures presented in **Blood in the Boardroom.**

PLOT SUMMARY

The delicate balance of power that the megacorps held over the world until 2057 was based largely on handshake agreements, trust that their mutual interests outweighed each corp's desire to get ahead of the others, and the knowledge that no one outside their ranks was powerful enough to challenge them. The precariousness of that trust and the megacorps' own blindness proved their undoing. Each handshake was routinely met with a dagger in the other hand, and outside events came to affect them in ways they could scarcely imagine.

The death of President Dunkelzahn in August of 2057, and the subsequent distribution of the dragon's hoard according to his last will and testament, at first seemed to have no effect on the corporate world except to let the lucky beneficiaries within it sit back and

collect the money that the slain president had willed to various parties. Buried in the will, however, were a handful of bequests that would forever change the make-up of the megacorps. The first and most damaging was the gift of enough Renraku stock to Miles Lanier, head of security at Fuchi Industrial Electronics, to earn him a seat on Renraku's board of directors. This bequest had immediate and devastating results. Lanier was a close personal friend of Richard Villiers, one of the three CEOs of the Fuchi triumvirate. All three—Villiers of Fuchi Americas, Shikei Nakatomi of Fuchi Asia and Korin Yamana of Fuchi Pan-Europa—had subtly schemed against each other throughout their careers. Each one's desire to gain ascendancy over the others had been held in check only by their common wish to keep Fuchi alive and thriving, and the fact that no one faction had the power to oust another without doing major damage to the entire corp. The loss of Lanier—and with him, possibly as many corporate secrets as he could carry—to a rival corporation weakened Villiers and gave Nakatomi and Yamana the opening they needed to remove Richard Villiers from the top spot in Fuchi's corporate structure.

But Villiers was ready for them. Having seen the proverbial writing on the wall, he quietly and slowly repurchased Fuchi Americas companies under a new corporation's name, with himself at its head. As Villiers and his onetime colleagues squared off in the boardroom, their business maneuvers led to street violence and open war in the Fuchi camp—a war in which, as in all civil wars, no one could ever truly claim victory.

Lanier's ascension to the Renraku board had unsettling repercussions for that corporation as well. Though distrustful of Lanier's intentions at first, most Renraku board members soon began to gloat over the damage done to Fuchi and forgot that Lanier posed a threat to their own interests as well. As Renraku rejoiced over its rival's troubles, Lanier and Villiers pulled off a surprise two-prong attack that left Renraku reeling and wiped out any advantage that Fuchi's demise might have brought the corporation. The added blows of a computer virus and an inexplicable lockdown of the Renraku arcology in Seattle forced this once-proud megacorporation to look for outside help. It came from an unexpected and not entirely welcome source—Shikei Nakatomi of Fuchi. Renraku survived with his help, but the damage was done, and the scars will not heal for a long time.

Just one line in Dunkelzahn's will caused the collapse of one Big Eight megacorp and the near-decimation of another ... but the wyrm's machinations from beyond the grave didn't end there. Arthur Vogel, eco-lawyer and onetime presidential candidate, received Dunkelzahn's stock in Ares and a seat on that corp's board of directors. To counter this new addition (and potential threat to his power), Ares CEO Damien Knight temporarily gained voting rights to the Gavilan Ventures stock that Dunkelzahn had left to his former translator and vice-president of the UCAS, Nadja Daviar. Control over the Gavilan Ventures swing votes gave Knight a lock on the board for the first time, and with it the power to finally deal with long-time rival and board member Leonard Aurelius. No fool, Aurelius recognized that his days as a partner in the company his father had founded were numbered. In a move unprecedented in megacorporate history, Aurelius took his long-standing battle with Knight to a new level—he sold his stake in Ares to Vogel and then jumped ship to Cross Applied Technologies of Québec. Founded and run by Dr. Lucien Cross, a colleague-turned-enemy of Damien Knight's, Cross Applied Technologies vaulted almost overnight to megacorporate status. Now Aurelius has a platform from which to strike much harder at Knight than he ever could within Ares, as well as an enthusiastic ally in Lucien Cross. Though Ares remains largely intact on the surface, the threats to Knight's control of the corp have never been greater.

Not even a dragon can control everything, however. Wuxing Incorporated, a small corporation that became a big winner in Dunkelzahn's lottery, initially could not manage to make the leap from little corp to megacorp. Wuxing's president, Wu Lung-Wai, tried every strategy from legal maneuvers to calling in favors from the Hong Kong Triads, but nothing seemed to work ... until Yamatetsu, newest of the Big Eight, decided to turn its back on Japan and relocate to Vladivostok, Russia. At the same time, Yamatetsu gave its backing to the Pacific Prosperity Group, a Wuxing-inspired project that included several mid-tier and smaller corporations in the Far East. Yamatetsu's clout and wealth, no longer tied to Japan, made the Pacific Prosperity Group a truly viable alternative to Japanese megacorporate power in Asia and bumped Wuxing up into the megacorporate ranks. This newfound organization, representing many other corporations, has become enough of a player in the East to threaten the foundations of the Japanese corporations. For its part, Yamatetsu has a new home, a new leader and a chance to create a new image. With a metahuman president and a free spirit on its board of directors, Yamatetsu can position itself outside the other Pacific Rim corporations and take advantage of their disarray.

During the two years in which these events unfold and corporate boards change drastically, and as the conflict among the corps grows larger, shadowrunners become the focus of the action. Whether looking to hit a corp when it's down or hired to make sure a corp *stays* down, shadowrunners are the first attackers and the first line of defense. From extractions to all-out destruction of corp facilities and everything in between, runners can work for one side or cherrypick the jobs they want. Whatever their role, however, they must navigate the confusing currents of alliances, plots and schemes. Their actions may well determine how the big boys act and react in the future.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Because the information presented in **Blood in the Boardroom** is story-based rather than part of a standard single, linear plot, hard-and-fast statistics and numbers are left up to the gamemaster to design based on the type of campaign he or she wants to run. Also, **Blood in the Boardroom** takes place over a long span of time in which certain events occur. In order to help the gamemaster keep those events straight, this book includes a timeline for the entire corporate war. The timeline appears on page 19.

Before beginning this adventure, the gamemaster should read **Running Blood in the Boardroom** (beginning on p. 11) for a complete overview of the various corporate entanglements. Next, the gamemaster should read through each of the tracks to

become familiar with the situations, important non-player characters and their individual plans and goals. The tracks are divided into five sections, each of which provides the gamemaster with information about that track's conflict, major characters, the activities of each corporation and the eventual outcome.

Each section opens with a fictional account of the events going down, from the perspective of those denizens who post their thoughts, observations and experiences to the Shadowland BBS. Written as black information, this opening piece offers enough facts to get things started, along with the usual doses of misinformation and rumor. The gamemaster can use these sections to indicate what players might hear on the street, or to "test the waters" and determine the players' interest in the events of that track. The gamemaster can also introduce elements of the event into the background of his or her current campaign. Consider these fictional pieces seeds of information to plant through the shadows that will let your players know something is happening.

Following the fictional opening, **What's Going Down** describes the overall plots, background and history leading up to the events of the corp war as they involve each corporation. These sections cover the schemes of the major players involved in each track, along with some of the possible effects of their actions.

The next section, **The Players,** describes important people involved in the events of each track and their backgrounds, motivations and goals. These profiles, more in-depth than standard **Shadowrun** character descriptions, are designed to give the gamemaster a more complete view of each character so that he or she can use the characters effectively in the overall story line. **The Players** also describes each individual's role in the corporation he or she works for, allowing the gamemaster to easily use these characters in campaigns outside **Blood in the Boardroom.**

The fourth section in each track, **Adventure Frameworks,** provides the gamemaster with complete outlines for adventures involving the events and plans described in **What's Going Down** and in the timeline (see **Running Blood in the Boardroom,** p. 11). With little additional preparation, the gamemaster can use these frameworks to run complete adventures centering on the events of a given track. The final section, **Adventure Ideas,** briefly describes ideas for further adventures involving each track's events. The gamemaster can use the material in this book to build these ideas into full-blown adventures.

ADVENTURE FRAMEWORKS

The adventure-framework format is an outline that gamemasters can use to plan out the events of an adventure while maintaining as much flexibility as they need. Each adventure framework has five parts: **Premise, Setup, Events, Climax** and **Sequels.**

The **Premise** briefly summarizes the adventure and describes its major sources of conflict or drama. The **Setup** describes how the adventure begins and how the characters become involved in it. This section may also include events that have led to the adventure and background on other concepts mentioned in the **Premise.** The **Events** in each framework describe encounters and events that occur during the course of the adventure. These may include situations that pose problems for the characters, actions by the adventure's antagonists or simply unexpected occurrences. Events are the obstacles or problems the player characters must overcome to complete the adventure successfully.

The **Climax** describes the likely conclusion of the adventure. (If player characters take unexpected actions, the ending of the adventure may differ considerably from the ending described in the **Climax,** and so gamemasters may want to plan for more than one possible conclusion.) **Sequels** describes stories that might happen after the adventure or as a result of the adventure. By running sequel adventures, gamemasters can create a sense of continuity in their campaigns.

RUNNING BLOOD IN THE BOARDROOM

Because **Blood in the Boardroom** is more complex than previous **Shadowrun** adventures, running it requires additional preparation on the part of the gamemaster. This section provides guidelines for running the multiple plot lines in this book and suggests ways to integrate them into an existing **Shadowrun** campaign.

HOOKING THE CHARACTERS

Most adventures assume that the player characters are sitting around waiting for a shadowrun to drop into their laps. **Blood in the Boardroom** is different. This adventure's corporate-war plot line takes place over a two-year period and involves many different corporations and players, each with their own agendas, and so the gamemaster must devise a variety of ways to get the player characters involved in the story line. Each of the following sections describes various means, motives and ploys the gamemaster can use to involve the player characters in the maelstrom of the corporate war.

SIMPLE RUN, MINIMAL COMPLICATIONS

The easiest way to get the player characters involved in the events of **Blood in the Boardroom** is to have a corporate Mr Johnson hire the team for a run. The events of the corp war are forcing employees to take sides like children in a messy divorce. Internal security and corporate watchdogs can no longer be trusted—who knows whether sensitive information will go astray or fall into the lap of someone who isn't supposed to see it? The only way a corp exec can be sure of doing what needs to be done is to buy loyalty from the outside—from the shadows, whose denizens will do the job they're paid to do and then vanish. No messy internal problems with divided loyalties, the results are the same, and the corp doesn't have to pay disability insurance.

This option allows the gamemaster to insert a corp war-related adventure or two among more ordinary shadowruns or into existing campaigns. The runners might start out doing simple shadowruns for one Johnson and gradually discover that they are knee-deep in the Fuchi civil war or the Ares-Cross conflict. Allow the player characters to meet some of the bigger players or contacts, thereby pulling them deeper into the mire and allowing even more adventures to take place.

CONTACTS

Contacts offer an ideal way to involve player characters in corp war adventures and plots. If any character has a business or corporate contact, that individual will surely know something about what's going on, even if only what he or she hears from his immediate superior or corporate headquarters. As with using a corporate Johnson, contacts can hire the runners to get another person out of the conflict (an interesting twist on the Friend of a Friend concept, p. 63, **SR Companion**), or may get caught up in the war and need their runner friends' help. Alternatively, contacts working for companies not directly involved in the corp war may be looking for any information the player characters have about the unfolding events as they try to plan their own future maneuvers.

The **Contacts and Enemies** section of the **Shadowrun Companion** is an invaluable aid to gamemasters who wish to use contacts in this way. Not having corporate contacts should pose no problem: the corporate war is expansive enough to alert most of the sprawl to street-level information (for example, most people would know that Fuchi is hitting Renraku, which is hitting back). The main underlying "truths" about the situation, however, would likely remain hidden. If the player characters want to know more than their contacts can tell them about events, gamemasters may find the Friend of a Friend rules (p. 63, **SR Companion**) particularly useful. These rules suggest ways the gamemaster can flesh out a portion of any player character's network of contacts and acquaintances who might connect the runners with the events in this book.

SECURITY

One option that involves the player characters directly in the events of the corp war is to have them work security for a big or small corporation. Just because a corp doesn't have a megacorporation's name on its letterhead doesn't mean that the megacorps ignore it. A megacorp may have invested in it with or without the smaller corp's knowledge, or may own it through various shells and holding companies. It might also own the little corp outright and simply never changed the corp's name to reflect that fact.

For example, the player characters may be hired to guard a small mom-and-pop business, only to discover that Mom is Damien Knight and Pop is Arthur Vogel (not a pretty picture). Runners in that situation could end up on the wrong end of a Seraphim attack from Cross Technologies and be forced to counterattack to save their street reps and get paid. This sequence of events tosses them right into the fray, making Enemies and Friends from the get-go.

An interesting variation on the security theme is to have the runners guard an important player in the corp war. Anyone who wants outside protection to make sure he knows who's protecting him (or her, or it) during all the internal unrest makes a plausible subject, from a smalltime corp research scientist to the new head of Yamatetsu. By "signing on" in this fashion, the player characters most likely would become entangled in multiple situations in a single track. An adventure like this allows for a test of the runners' loyalty to their meal ticket (or lack thereof) and might lead to some lucrative permanent arrangements (if they back the right person and that person survives the conflict).

THIS IS PERSONAL

A time-honored **Shadowrun** method for getting player characters involved in an event is to make things personal. The characters might have old friends or contacts working for one of the corps, as mentioned in **Contacts,** or they might owe a personal debt to a corp. (Remember that cyberware we gave you? Time to

pay us for it, chum.) The characters might become involved when the events of the corp war directly affect them. Fallout from the conflict might threaten friends, family or contacts, prompting the characters to try to help or avenge their loved ones or associates.

Gamemasters can also tailor the information and events in **Blood in the Boardroom** to fit their own campaigns by weaving the characters, adventures and events in this book into their own existing material. For example, if a gamemaster has already created some corporations or corporate background figures in his campaign, he may use those characters in place of the characters described in **Blood in the Boardroom.** Adding personal details from an existing campaign to the mix of material in **Blood in the Boardroom** will help make the adventure seem more real to the players and will give the gamemaster some ready-made hooks to draw the player characters into the story through their relationships with characters they already know.

If the material in **Blood in the Boardroom** conflicts with something already established in your campaign, feel free to stick with your own version. The overall story arc of the various corp war tracks is the most important factor, not the individual non-player characters within each track. If you have created a character or corporation that fits the tone of the campaign, feel free to substitute it for any similar character or corp listed in this book.

ALTERNATE CAMPAIGNS

In general, the material in this book assumes that the player characters are shadowrunners, but they may play many other roles in this story line. The events of the corp war can work with many of the alternative campaigns outlined in the **Shadowrun Companion,** particularly a law enforcement, gang, DocWagon or media campaign. The following information offers gamemasters some suggestions for adapting the material in this book to suit such nontraditional **Shadowrun** campaigns.

DocWagon

The events of **Blood in the Boardroom** are likely to create a hefty body count, including those not normally associated with a sprawl firefight—the bigwigs with the Platinum DocWagon cards. Player characters in a DocWagon campaign can get into situations and meet people they normally would never run into. Just getting to the client may pose enormous challenges, as player characters may have to rescue a "traitor" to one corp faction or another who's unlucky enough to get caught in the wrong place at the wrong time.

In a twist on the traditional rescue story, as the war gets worse, people who've never even seen a gun, let alone had one pointed at them (managers, mid-level executives, scientists, secretaries and so on), may begin to pull their DocWagon tags whenever they find themselves in a hostile situation. This could severely strain the DocWagon team's response time and put player characters into increasingly nerve-racking situations.

A DocWagon team's relative freedom of action compared with "criminal" shadowrunners might lead the player characters to do favors for one corp or faction or another; they might carry messages, or various corps might offer them bribes for "special treatment" or to obtain classified medical information on employees of rival companies.

Finally, the suborbital shuttle crash in the Redmond Barrens (see **Track 1: Civil War,** p. 20) makes DocWagon busier than ever. In addition to those who were injured or died in the shuttle, the casualties across the Barrens would be so great and the situation

so nightmarish that multiple adventures might easily involve rescuing people and surviving such threats as falling buildings, paranormal critters set loose, looters and gangs. The **Crash Team** adventure framework in the Fuchi track is particularly well-suited to DocWagon characters.

Media

The conflict among the different corporations means a war of words as well as of bullets. The different newsnets and screamsheets are all looking to break the big story that will expose the megacorps' inner workings and score the highest ratings. Of course, these reporters and their crews are also messing with some serious opposition as they chase after the real story of the corp war.

A media/reporter campaign can follow the events described in the **Timeline of Events** (see pp. 18-19) with an eye toward broadcasting them to the viewing public. How involved the reporters become depends on how badly the corps want to keep their own secrets while exposing those of their enemies. Of course, the shuttle crash will whip the media into a frenzy of theories and speculations. Just chasing down these rumors may be a campaign in itself.

An interesting twist to a media campaign is the spin the corps put on events, either to clear their own names or condemn their opponents. Corps using the media this way might plant disinformation, sending media player characters on wild-goose chases to cover up what the corps are really doing.

Special Forces

Because the corps are extraterritorial, most governments can't stop them; they can only hope to contain them. Therefore, it is unlikely that government black ops teams will become directly involved in the events of the corp war. However, such characters might easily get involved on the periphery of **Blood in the Boardroom.**

For example, player characters in a Special Forces campaign may be government plants who infiltrated one of the battling corporations or factions in order to keep an eye on that corp's government contracts. This type of double-edged adventure needs a gamemaster's heavy hand because the characters must maintain dual loyalties in a situation where neither government nor corp will accept anything but total obedience. This type of advanced campaign ideally should be played by gamemasters and players familiar with the **Shadowrun** rules who prefer roleplaying to gunfights.

Alternatively, the player characters can be recruited to work for a corporation's own special-operations division. This type of campaign, however, requires the player characters to take orders and ask no questions—not the type of game most players enjoy playing.

Law Enforcement

As with Special Forces campaigns, law-enforcement campaigns would work mainly on the periphery of the events presented in **Blood in the Boardroom.**

One way to involve Lone Star player characters is to square them off against corporate security in an investigation. Corporate security would try very hard to cover up any wrongdoing (removing evidence, planting false evidence, giving false testimony and flat out refusing to cooperate), or would attempt to lead the police away from anything incriminating while trying to incriminate someone else.

The Ares conflict makes for a particularly interesting angle on a law-enforcement campaign; it involves two "independent" police groups (Knight Errant and Lone Star Québec) from rival companies squaring off, both trying to look good in the public eye while making their rival look bad.

Magic

Though **Blood in the Boardroom** does not center on the use of magic, gamemasters will find it relatively easy to involve magical groups or organizations in the conflict. One good way to involve magical characters is to leak magical corporate research down to the streets. As the corp war expands, what used to be kept behind closed doors finds its way out in the open. All the major corps have some sort of magical division or research department, and many also own smaller companies that deal specifically with magical research. Either of these may become tempting targets for runs.

Also, the free spirit Buttercup's position on Yamatetsu's board of directors should provide some magical interest to player characters. The adventure framework **What's In a Name** (see **Track 4: Out of the East,** p. 84) can easily be played by a magical group.

Finally, as in all major wars, magical support makes a terrific asset for anyone who can hire such a team. Even "harmless" types of magic like clairvoyance and clairaudience spells will be worth their weight in gold as the player characters try to find out who is a friend and who is a foe, in situations where loyalties switch by the minute.

Gangs and Pirates

Both gang and pirate campaigns fit neatly into the corp war plot line. Gangs will be needed as each corporate faction tries to get as many foot soldiers as possible in on the action. For players who don't mind being cannon fodder, a gang campaign can be lots of fun.

Piracy opens up another front in the corp war. For one thing, the corps' collective concentration on other matters leaves the sea a bit more open, allowing pirates a freer hand than usual. Also, every war needs supplies, and various corps will do whatever they can to ensure their own supply lines (via pirates) while keeping those same supplies from their rivals. The effects of the corp war also cause ripple effects around the globe wherever the corps operate, including such "exotic" locations as the Philippines and Africa. Pirates can back a corp faction or play off one side against another, bringing vital shipments to whoever can pay the most. Gamemasters should manipulate supply and demand in this type of campaign. For example, if Ares is gearing up for a war, it may be more difficult to "find a crate of guns on an abandoned boat," thereby hiking the cost of weapons and making it riskier for pirates to meet their obligations. The adventure framework **Mainframed** (see **Track 4: Out of the East,** p. 81) can easily be adapted to a pirate campaign.

Finally, if cutting off supply lines to a given corp is important, control of the docks becomes even more important. This allows the gamemaster to render useless contacts the pirates may have used previously and forces them to either deal with the corps or not deal at all—an excellent way of driving the characters into the corp war.

Gamemasters will find the additional material on gangs from the **Shadowrun Companion** and the **Underworld Sourcebook** useful in running a gang campaign based on events and adventure ideas from this book. The **Cyberpirates** sourcebook covers piracy and will be invaluable for running a piracy campaign.

Criminal Organizations

The corp war touches every aspect of the **Shadowrun** world, and its criminal organizations are no exception. Many of the organized-crime syndicates have ties to the megacorps, whether through back-room handshake deals or legitimate business contracts (casinos and bars on corporate property and such). A conflict of the corp war's magnitude will affect business for the syndicates, and with so many loyalties being split or lost, the chances of the syndicates taking the law into their own hands greatly increase. If the gamemaster wishes, he or she can link the events of **Mob War!** to **Blood in the Boardroom** without too much trouble.

Also, the criminal organizations run many of the channels for smuggled goods, and the supplies they control become even more necessary as the corp war rages on. Dock and warehouse battles should be the norm as corporations try to stop the competition and some corp factions try to control something they've never had to before. Creative gamemasters can tie elements of the mob war into the corp war, as well as any piracy plots the gamemaster may have already set in motion.

GAMEMASTERING THE CORPORATIONS

Blood in the Boardroom portrays the corporations in a different light. Yes, they are still nuyen-hungry, soulless beasts, but the armor that makes them seem so invincible is cracked on the inside. The corps are finally doing to themselves what they have done to everyone else—(insert scatological phrase here).

The gamemaster's goal is to create suspenseful stories full of interesting characters with whom the player characters can interact. The challenge to running adventures based in and around corporations lies in avoiding the temptation to give every corporate employee a personality that reflects what the gamemaster and players may assume is the corporation's nature. For example, every Aztechnology employee becomes a pro-magical ideologue, all Saeder-Krupp employees are super-devious with a million plots running in their heads, Fuchi employees must all be scientific drones, Ares is full of well-armed cyber-gods who kill you if you look at them oddly and every Mitsuhama worker is a yakuza operative. These stereotypes may work just fine for the first few contacts or corp employees, but then they tend to get boring.

Blood in the Boardroom shows that, while some employees are loyal to the corporation and what it stands for, others align themselves with specific individuals, and still others are in a state of shock—more concerned with losing their jobs and livelihoods than anything else. The gamemaster is free to place characters with different perspectives in the story line as contacts, NPCs, buddies or any other type of person who will make interesting stories. Even long-time contacts or Friends of Friends can experience different emotions or concerns that the player characters never knew they might feel. The following sections cover different backgrounds the gamemaster can use to give depth to corps and people within them, thereby adding interest and realism to plots and story lines.

DIVIDED LOYALTIES

Much of the overall plot line of the corp war involves the megacorporations' internal struggles to the point of all-out civil war. Intra-corporate intrigue is the best way to illustrate this type of split. Intra-corp shadowruns are already popular (one manager wants to look good, so he hires shadowrunners to hit a division run by another manager), but for a corp war the scale of such operations should become great enough to affect every person in the divisions involved.

In Fuchi, for example, an individual may owe loyalty to any one of three factions: Villiers, Nakatomi or Yamana. No one remains independent—not the secretary, not the janitor, not the guy who flies the company plane, not even the mailroom boy. The gamemaster needs to play this up—contacts dry up if player characters want black information on the faction they support, or willingly spill corp secrets if runners want information on an opposing faction. Also, runners may be hired to geek seemingly insignificant people (secretaries, chauffeurs, middle managers) just to send a message to others.

A House Divided

A company is rarely full of employees just sitting around deciding which faction to support. Loyalty is inbred and goes deeper than an office vote. Most people give their loyalty to the corporation without a second thought, especially when the corporate parent is big and happy and no one wants to revolt (though there are always those few who think the grass is greener in the other corporate compound).

When a corporation divides, its loyal employees are like kids caught in a divorce—confused, angry, sad and full of pain. Some choose to follow those who did them a good turn: the manager who hired them or the local office to which they report. Others rebel, ripping themselves from the only corporate parent they know and going someplace else. Still others transfer their loyalty to the faction that their leader follows. For example, if a character works for a Fuchi Americas-based corporation, he or she may easily become a proud Novatech employee without feeling the least bit betrayed or hurt.

The gamemaster should use this confusion, as well as the indecision of the many corporate drones asked for the first time in their lives to make a choice, to create conflict and keep the players guessing. Husbands may choose one faction, their wives who work in a different division another. Loyalties may switch based on better offers or promotions, or just gut reactions.

WORKING FOR A FACTION

In all of the tracks, management (in these cases, the actual owners of the corps) is making changes in the corp's fundamental philosophy. These managers have employees loyal to them

throughout various levels of their corporations. In the cases of Fuchi, Ares and Yamatetsu, many of those loyal managers may get left behind in the wake of the changing of the guard or find themselves in enemy camps. The gamemaster should play up these situations.

For example, it is common knowledge that Fuchi is really three different companies under one roof. If Fuchi Pan-Europa builds a division in Seattle, it is staffed by Fuchi Americas employees and Fuchi Pan-Europa employees (with a possible Fuchi Asia employee tossed in so that faction can see what its partners are up to). When the split comes and Fuchi Pan-Europa joins with Shiawase, Shiawase employees get mixed in with people who may still feel some loyalty to Villiers at Novatech. If one of the Novatech loyalists is important, Villiers will try everything to get him or her out of Shiawase's newly acquired company, even as Shiawase is doing its best to keep that same employee happy and productive in his or her new corporate home.

Gamemasters should remember that with the number of companies changing hands, almost every corporation will have someone someplace who owes his job to someone who now works for a rival. This fact has led the corporations to set in motion a series of tests for employees, to weed out the disloyal. Others have all but quarantined their employees so that they cannot contact anyone on the outside. Gamemasters can use player characters for extractions (real ones and loyalty-test setups) or as couriers in the dangerous game of corporate espionage.

RESEARCH TERRORISM

All of the boards of directors and owners of corporations have their own pet projects and such funded directly by the part of the company they own. For example, Damien Knight of Ares loves his Arms, Security and Space divisions but doesn't pay much attention to the others. Leonard Aurelius remembers Ares' past and maintains interest in the other divisions, especially the vehicle division. But Aurelius also has some personal research projects that Knight may not know about. These projects, at companies buried deep within shell companies, are the impetus behind which ones Aurelius will try to buy in order to bring them and their valuable research to the Cross camp.

The bloodiest fighting, therefore, will occur over these companies. The research facilities and information they share with the rest of the megacorp are vital to its future success; without them, the megacorp may lose any chance of defeating its rivals. Gamemasters should set up smaller corporations without any indication that they belong to a major megacorp and then let the player characters deal with the ramifications. (Oops, you just hit one of Knight's pet projects or a facility that belongs to Richard Villiers ... .)

The important things to keep in mind are the goods: the information, the scientist, the download, the prototype. The corp war plot line intensifies "business as usual"—the corps need to protect their assets even more stringently and make payback even more severe. Too many corps are on the brink of collapse at every turn to allow for even one loss. From now on, there is no such thing as acceptable losses for most of the megas.

Many of the big corps would rather destroy their work than see it get into rival hands at this point. Such self-inflicted operations are painful, but they do stop the competition from getting a leg up. Once rare, these strikes are becoming more and more common, as the corps realize they would rather chew off their own legs than give their enemies the satisfaction of cherry picking their hard-won research and results.

THE ORPHANS

With the publication of Dunkelzahn's will, it became public knowledge for the first time that the great dragon held positions with many companies and invested in countless others—all without anyone knowing it (including the owners of the companies in question). As companies get further and further away from the parent corporation or actual owners, the less they and the public know about who really owns what. Corporations and their investors and owners all have holding companies, shell companies and investment companies, which in turn have their own holding companies, shell companies and investment companies. By the time it gets down to the little two-guy software company in Tallahassee, Florida, the two guys have no idea that the corporation so heavily invested in them is Fuchi Asia or Yamatetsu (or both). Probably only Lofwyr can remember and name all the companies he actually controls.

When the breakup happens, some of those links are shattered as well. These orphan companies may see their incomes dry up (or not) or may face new demands (or almost none) from their new owners. The orphans are the companies that provided income for the major corporations, as opposed to providing anything all that cutting-edge. An orphan might be a restaurant in Seattle or a chain of stores in Milwaukee, a vineyard in the CFS or a film studio in L.A.—anything that can make a corp some money or sounds like a good investment. Gamemasters can make up their own links and orphans at any time. Most such companies will go on their merry way, making their bagels or soycakes or synth-rubber chew toys, but some will suffer other fates as records are revealed, business dealings are exposed and data trails find their way onto the Shadowland BBS.

For example, the two software guys in Tallahassee may discover something like the following data trail when Shiawase agents come to their door. One of their major investors is Confederate Investments of Tallahassee, a division of Confederate Investment Corporation of Atlanta. A major investor in CIC of Atlanta, in turn, is a shell company called Mile High Economic Studies of Denver (CAS sector), a division of the North American Economic Group, a subsidiary of Calablack Investments of London. Calablack is wholly owned by the Calablack Family Trust, which is controlled by the Fuchi Pan-Europa division of what used to be Fuchi Industrial Electronics, which has just recently merged through the marriage of its corporate head with Shiawase Corporation. Through just as many or more back doors, Confederate Investment Corporation of Atlanta is also partly owned by Yamatetsu.

The owners of the orphans will have a great variety of reactions to being a part of a big megacorp family. Many will want out—they have maintained their independence for this long and feel no need to be part of a megacorporation. The adventure framework **This Hurts Me More than It Hurts You** (see **Track 2: Neck and Neck**, p. 49) is an excellent example of how badly some independent companies will want out from under the thumb of a megacorporate giant.

STORY STRUCTURES

Unlike a typical **Shadowrun** adventure, **Blood in the Boardroom** follows several different plot lines whose events all happen simultaneously. To run an adventure of this complexity requires extra planning and preparation by the gamemaster, but it also provides more choices for the players and a richer background for running a series of linked adventures. This section offers hints and guidelines for gamemasters on different ways to run the plot lines provided in this book.

Each plot line is designed as a track that follows the activities of a particular corporation and its struggles to survive, along with some adventure frameworks and ideas that go with each track. The gamemaster can involve his players in a single track, with that track serving as the primary story and the events from other tracks serving as peripheral or background material, or he can use the tracks one at a time to involve the characters in different sides of the conflict.

ONE-TRACK MIND

The simplest way to run **Blood in the Boardroom** is to choose the track most interesting to the player group and run the adventure frameworks or ideas presented for that track. Gamemasters can tie together some of the adventure frameworks to create a longer adventure or intersperse the adventures in the track with other shadowruns.

With the player characters following one track, the gamemaster can use events and important characters from the other tracks as background material for events elsewhere in the metroplex that might affect the player characters indirectly through their contacts or friends, or simply create rumors for them to hear on the streets. Characters and events from the other tracks can also serve as useful background material for creating continuing corp war adventures.

JUMPING THE TRACKS

Ambitious gamemasters can connect the different tracks, allowing the runners to jump from one to another and become involved in many facets of the corp war. As an example, the runners might be hired to test the loyalty of a scientist at a new Novatech facility. They discover that he really works for the Nakatomis and Yamanas, former rivals of Novatech's owner (Richard Villiers), and has been feeding sensitive information to Renraku and Shiawase corporations. Villiers wants the runners to find out just how far the Nakatomi/Yamana network extends, and hires them to go in undercover and see who is involved. This kind of mix-and-match approach can provide the player characters and the gamemaster with numerous angles from which to approach the overall story.

Following several different tracks gives the gamemaster a variety of adventures to run. It is best if the adventures start out

small, with other shadowruns interspersed between them. As events progress and the conflict among the different corporate factions escalates, the runners find themselves getting more and more offers of work from the corps.

Shadowrunners who try to stay "independent" and offer their services to the highest bidder may receive some lucrative opportunities, but they may also buy themselves a great deal of trouble. Association with one faction usually means another will view them as the enemy (especially if the runners get into a firefight and kill some of another corp's loyalists). The gamemaster must carefully consider how some of the important NPCs in the different corps or factions will react to the runners' shifting loyalties. Shadowrunners too deeply involved in the corp war whose motivations and loyalties are in question might end up as targets of corporate security, ordered to eliminate potentially dangerous loose cannons.

FREEFORM PLOT LINE

The most challenging, and perhaps most rewarding, way to run the material presented in this book is to let the players dictate much of the adventure's direction and decide what opportunities they will pursue. This freeform style of adventuring places a great deal of control over the game in the hands of the players and requires a gamemaster who can respond quickly to player ideas and actions.

In the freeform scenario, the gamemaster slowly leaks information about the internal corporate struggles to the players. He or she can do this through any of the means described in the fiction sections that begin each track or by any method of the gamemaster's own creation. The gamemaster then allows the players to decide how their characters want to proceed, and how (or if) they want to take advantage of the corp war. This can be as simple as shadowrunners going out to look for potential runs (and nuyen) in the wake of the conflict, or as complex as runners deliberately jumping into the action feet first in the hopes of affecting the megacorporate power structure.

The gamemaster should read through all of the major players and events described in this book and then decide how best to integrate the events into his or her campaign. The gamemaster will need to be familiar with the material in this book because the story line can go off in any number of directions. The players might choose to deal primarily with events involving Fuchi or Renraku and stay away from the Yamatetsu plot, or they might jump at the chance to enter the Ares struggle and ignore the Fuchi civil war altogether.

The trick to making a freeform scenario work is letting events flow with the players' actions rather than trying to force the players to follow a planned path. The gamemaster can then weave different elements from the adventure frameworks and ideas given in this book into the overall story as opportunities present themselves.

For example, the players may like the way Lucien Cross operates and want to help him in his struggle against Damien Knight and Ares. As they begin to open up opportunities by hitting Ares and getting word to Cross that they are available for "miscellaneous proactive corporate acquisitions," they could find themselves making runs on smaller corps that once belonged to Fuchi but were orphaned by that corp's infighting. These runs bring them into competition with Novatech, Richard Villiers' new baby. Villiers is trying to keep his young corporation alive, protected and expanding, partly through acquiring as many former Fuchi holdings as he can. The runners might then be contacted by Novatech to stop Knight from grabbing the orphans. But Fuchi's other former partners, who have gone over to Renraku and Shiawase respectively, also want those Fuchi orphans, so working for Novatech means that the runners will face the wrath of Shiawase and Renraku as well as Ares. Alternatively, the runners might refuse to work for Novatech and instead offer their services to Renraku or Shiawase.

Keep in mind that just because the players choose a direction, that doesn't mean that major non-player characters from other tracks cease to manipulate events. If the players decide that their characters will have the most fun joining the Pacific Prosperity Group in the Yamatetsu track (**Track 4: Out of the East**), the Fuchi civil war and the Ares/Cross conflict still occur; these events merely happen in the background instead of the foreground.

NOVEL PLOT LINE

In this type of story, the gamemaster structures the characters' corp war adventures like the chapters of a **Shadowrun** novel. Using the timeline of events (see p. 19) as groundwork, the gamemaster can launch the runners into the story line at the beginning of the conflict, when the Fuchi factions are running stealth missions against each other and against Renraku; alternatively, that can happen in the background during an ongoing campaign, and the player characters can get involved much later when the struggle hits the streets.

The difference between a novel structure and the other story structures described in this section is that a novel campaign has a clear beginning, middle and end, while other types of campaigns and adventures are more open-ended. The novel structure is especially well-suited to a specialized short-term campaign that the gamemaster wants to run to a definite conclusion. It can also be a self-contained story line within an existing campaign.

RUNNING OUTSIDE SEATTLE

Though the events in **Blood in the Boardroom** take place in multiple places around the world, the gamemaster can feel free to manipulate the actual locations to fit the campaign being run. As always, Seattle is the default setting for many of the adventures, but if your gaming group doesn't run in Seattle, you can use the material in this book to bring the events and repercussions of the corp war into another city. The only exception is the crash of the suborbital transport. That happens in Seattle no matter where the campaign may be set.

Almost any major city in the world will be caught up in factional corporate fighting; the gamemaster may simply have to tinker with some of the adventure frameworks if he or she wants to alter the location of events.

ENDING THE WAR

One of the ways in which **Blood in the Boardroom** differs from most **Shadowrun** adventures is that it lacks a set ending. The

inter-corporate conflict that begins in this book may calm down as the corps try to regroup and regain their balance; in any war, combatants can only keep fighting for a limited amount of time before resources and profits take too much damage to sustain the conflict. However, the corp war is far from over. Deep scars and the loss of profits will force the corporations to become much more aggressive, and personal vendettas rather than the bottom line will continue to be a major source of shadow work. The overt fighting may end, but the covert fighting has just begun.

Blood in the Boardroom illustrates only the most general events that occur over a two-year period. It is up to the gamemaster and the players to define the specifics as they see and play them.

Individual gamemasters may not want to involve their players in an ongoing **Blood in the Boardroom** campaign; instead, they might want to end the characters' involvement at a specific point, which can be easily accomplished. The corporate conflict may die down at different times, allowing the player characters to get out before things start to heat up again. The gamemaster can then revisit the corp war in later adventures or simply use it as a background element while the player characters pursue other activities.

Gamemasters can also extend the events of this book to provide additional corp war-themed adventures for the player characters. The short adventure ideas provided with each track can supply many additional adventures to extend such a campaign.

BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The background to the events of the corp war ties together elements from many different sources. Though this book contains everything needed to play the adventures here, gamemasters may find the following sourcebooks useful for additional reference or ideas.

Portfolio of a Dragon: Dunkelzahn's Secrets contains hundreds of plot hooks, adventure ideas and major players in the **Shadowrun** universe, any of which might offer other ways into the corp war story. **Target: UCAS** contains background on Boston and Detroit; Boston is the hometown of Richard Villiers and Novatech, while Detroit virtually belongs to Damien Knight and Ares. These books offer more in-depth studies of some of the people behind the corp war, as well as local flavor for setting a game in the dens of these tigers.

Novels are another excellent source of background information on the corp war. The **Dragon Heart** trilogy (**Stranger Souls**, **Clockwork Asylum** and **Beyond the Pale**) gives new insights into Damien Knight and the beginnings of his takeover of Ares Macrotechnology; **Headhunters** weaves a story around Fuchi's loss of its head of security, Miles Lanier, to Renraku. The novel **Technobabel** reveals what Lanier does while at Renraku and the beginnings of Richard Villiers' plan, as well as covering the first setback to hit Renraku.

Future products include **Target: Smuggler Havens,** which covers Yamatetsu's new home in Vladivostok, and **Renraku Arcology: Shutdown,** which explores what is happening to the Renraku arcology in Seattle. With the corps reshuffled and their players reassigned, a new corporate sourcebook—**The Corporate Download**—will put all the information on the new corporate order in one place. Finally, **New Seattle** will update Seattle to 2060 and will include all the events that occurred in the world of **Shadowrun** from 2054 to 2060.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS (2057-2060)

The master timeline provided below outlines the major events leading up to and through the corp war. The timeline serves as a quick-reference guide and a source of ideas around which the gamemaster can build adventures, using the background material, adventure frameworks and adventure ideas in the different tracks.

The dates are set up as part of the ongoing history of the **Shadowrun** universe, over a three-year period. Gamemasters must understand that the events below will correspond to the official FASA history of the **Shadowrun** universe. We know that, realistically, individual campaigns may not work on the same schedule that we do, but that is not a problem. If your campaign takes place before 2057, use some of the ideas in this product to plant future hooks, adventures and plot lines: contacts who will be part of the corp war plot line, friends caught in the crossfire, enemies who will want the player characters dead because they received inside information dealing with future events and so on.

This product works best for groups that are playing campaigns concurrent with the time frame, because you can play out the events in order or bounce around, having things take place in the background or as side adventures in the middle of an ongoing campaign. Also, if your player characters find themselves knee-deep in the corp war, they have an opportunity to affect its outcome.

For open-style campaigns not tied down to our timeline of events, this product works well as a series of new adventure concepts, plots and angles in which to take your campaign. The timeline below also lets you know what is happening where during your campaign, so that some insignificant event the player characters hear about from a fixer or on Shadowland can come to the fore later on.

Finally, the timeline gives players and gamemasters an instant resource for starting new campaigns or updating older ones; it allows player groups to jump right in at any point without having to start over at square one.

CORPORATE WAR TIMELINE

9 August 2057—Dunkelzahn is assassinated on the night of his inauguration as president of the United Canadian and American States.

15 August 2057—Miles Lanier leaves Fuchi to join the board of directors of Renraku Computer Systems.

20 August 2057—Arthur Vogel announces that he has accepted a position as president of Sierra, Inc.

22 August 2057—Nadja Daviar grants Damien Knight voting control over Gavilan Ventures' stock in Ares Macrotechnology for a period of two years.

12 September 2057—Wu Lung-Wai announces dramatic expansion plans for Wuxing, Inc.

22 February 2058—Ares implements "Operation Extermination," a large-scale physical and magical assault on the insect spirits infesting the Chicago Containment Zone. The Chicago quarantine is officially lifted.

7 January 2059—Tadamako Shibanokuji, chairman of Yamatetsu's board of directors, suffers a debilitating stroke. Control of his stock shares goes to Yamatetsu CEO Saru Iwano.

22 February 2059—Tadamako Shibanokuji dies in a Yamatetsu hospital in Kyoto. Control of his stock reverts to his son, Yuri Shibanokuji.

5 May 2059—Yamatetsu announces the relocation of its corporate headquarters to Vladivostok, Russia.

16 May 2059—Dosan Aburakoji, one of Mitsuhama's Corporate Court representatives, commits suicide at his Kyoto home.

6 June 2059—Fuchi brings suit against Renraku in the Corporate Court, accusing them of using Miles Lanier's inside knowledge to steal Fuchi trade secrets. Within 24 hours, the charges are dropped. Lanier leaves Renraku, selling his four million shares of Renraku stock to the Zurich-Orbital Gemeinschaft Bank.

16 June 2059—Navroz Chandarla of Renraku is named to the Corporate Court seat left vacant by Aburakoji's death.

8 July 2059—Pacific Prosperity Group officially forms.

11 July 2059—Flight 1118 from Tokyo crashes into Seattle's Redmond Barrens, on the Salish-Shidhe border. Nearly 200 people are killed in the plane and on the ground, hundreds more are injured and fires rage out of control throughout the district for more than 24 hours.

19 July 2059—David Hague, one of Fuchi's Corporate Court representatives, is found dead in Redmond, Seattle.

15 August 2059—Li Feng of Wuxing, Inc. is named to the Corporate Court seat left vacant by Hague's death.

22 August 2059—Nadja Daviar regains control of the Ares stock owned by Gavilan Ventures.

29 September 2059—"White Monday." The Tokyo Stock Exchange suffers its largest single-day drop in 70 years.

6 October 2059—Richard Villiers of Fuchi announces the formation of Novatech, Inc., which continues Villiers' strategy of acquiring large portions of Fuchi. Miles Lanier is appointed Novatech's director of security.

20 October 2059—Leonard Aurelius sells all of his Ares stock to Arthur Vogel. Vogel steps down as president of Sierra, Inc., and is replaced by Gary Grey.

27 October 2059—Leonard Aurelius joins the board of directors of Cross Applied Technologies.

15 December 2059—Anna Villalobos replaces Domingo Chavez as Aztechnology's representative on the Corporate Court.

19 December 2059—The Renraku arcology is closed to visitors for an indefinite period due to problems with its computer systems.

3 February 2060—Renraku CEO Inazo Aneki begins an indefinite leave of absence. Haruhiko Nakada takes over as interim CEO.

19 March 2060—A virus of unknown origin attacks Seattle's Matrix RTG. People accessing the RTG suffer memory loss, psychotic episodes or brain death. The attack lasts for nearly ten minutes, then ends with no explanation or aftereffects.

26 March 2060—Navroz Chandarla, one of Renraku's Corporate Court representatives, dies in a terrorist bombing in New Delhi.

5 April 2060—Shikei Nakatomi of Fuchi purchases four million shares of stock in Renraku from the Zurich-Orbital Gemeinschaft Bank. Renraku begins acquiring large portions of Fuchi.

15 April 2060—Yves Aquillon of Cross Applied Technologies gains the Corporate Court seat left vacant by Chandarla's death.

7 June 2060—Korin Yamana of Fuchi announces his marriage to Mitsuko Shiawase of Shiawase Envirotech.

14 June 2060—Shiawase Corporation purchases all remaining assets of Fuchi Industrial Electronics. Korin Yamana accepts a position on Shiawase's board of directors.

15 June 2060—Neil Benson replaces Francesco Napoli as Renraku's representative on the Corporate Court.

28 July 2060—Fuchi Industrial Electronics is officially dissolved.

TRACK ONE: CIVIL WAR

THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD

• Welcome to the MegaWatch SIG, your source for all the news on the Big Eight megacorps—official and otherwise. Speak freely, but play nice!
• The Management

• Well, chummers, it's finally official: Fuchi is breaking up.
• Beancounter

• ??? Where did that come from?
• Whatzit

• A little deductive reasoning, that's all, Exhibit A, Whatzit old boy, is the following press release, which emerged from the New York offices of Villiers International a few hours back.

VILLIERS INTERNATIONAL AND
CAMBRIDGE HOLDINGS MERGE AS NOVATECH

NEW YORK, NY, UCAS, October 6, 2059—A major new Matrix development and software design business has been formed following the acquisition of Villiers International and Cambridge Holdings, incorporated by the newly established company Novatech, Incorporated. The merger makes Novatech one of the largest computer development corporations in the UCAS; it also possesses significant interests in the aerospace, magical research and corporate security fields. The president of Novatech will be Richard Villiers, currently president and CEO of Fuchi Americas and Villiers International.

According to Villiers, Cambridge Holdings' array of Matrix-oriented companies, combined with Villiers International's diverse and highly successful subsidiaries, will make Novatech "an economic centerpiece for the eastern seaboard of the UCAS." Based on the annual cash flow of Villiers International and Cambridge Holdings, Novatech is expected to be the second largest independent corporation in the UCAS, behind industry giant Ares Macrotechnology. Villiers added, "After consolidating into Novatech, we expect to continue growth by acquisition. This is a wonderful beginning for Novatech."

"We're extremely positive about the integration of the two companies," said Lucas Don, managing director of Cambridge Holdings. "Villiers International adds a wide new range of possibilities for our shareholders, and makes Cambridge part of a diverse and expanding whole. We believe that the resulting corporation will take our business to a new level of excellence." Don will be assuming the role of senior vice president at Novatech.

Current shareholders of Cambridge Holdings will receive 1.32 shares of Novatech stock for each share of Cambridge stock they possess, while Villiers International stock will be converted to Novatech stock on a 1-to-1 basis. Funding for the mer>BREAK<

Well, that's enough of that. The rest of the press release is the usual banking drek, more vapid quotes, contact addresses and so forth.
• Beancounter

• Well, gee, thanks for the posting, Beanie, but ... so fraggin what? Villiers grabs another holding company, adds it to his little corporate empire and slaps a new name on it. From this, you figure Fuchi is cracking up? Gimme a break.
• Whatzit

• Fine, then—we'll do this the long way 'round. We all know who Richard Villiers is, right? Apart from being the president of Villiers International, that is.
• Beancounter

• Sure. He's the CEO of Fuchi, owns about a third of the corp and has been fighting off the other two main shareholders ever since he lost Lanier to Renraku.
• AAAbacus

Count on me.'

• Correct. Now, what can anyone tell me about Cambridge Holdings?
• Beancounter

• As the name implies, it's based out of Cambridge, Massachusetts, right near Villiers' own power base in Boston. It has controlling interests in a wide variety of software and hardware development houses, including PULSEware, Aurora Design, Simplex Software, CompuForce down in the CAS and probably a bunch of others.
• The Dark Wight

• And?
• Beancounter

• Frag, I hate the Socratic method. Okay, let's see what the old smartframe dug up. Lucas Don, CEO of CompuForce, founded Cambridge Holdings in 2057. Cambridge bought CompuForce and immediately started a series of acquisitions that has continued to the present ... the most recent acquisition was WolfWare, a personaware outfit in Minneapolis. ... sorry, Bean, I don't see what you're driving at.
• The Dark Wight

● Wait a minute .. WolfWare? Wasn't that a subsidiary of Cyberspace Development Corp.?
● Turner

● Let's see ... yep, looks like WolfWare was part of CDC and Cambridge pulled a hostile takeover. So?
● The Dark Wight

● So CDC is a subsidiary of Fuchi Americas—Villiers' branch of Fuchi. He controlled WolfWare in the first place. By taking over Cambridge Holdings, he's getting his own company back ... except now he owns it, not Fuchi.
● Turner

● Seems like an awful lot of trouble to go through over one little software house. They must be working on something pretty big.
● Whatzit

● I don't think so. If WolfWare was working on something that important, Villiers could have blocked the takeover. I think he deliberately let Cambridge make the takeover so he could get personal control of WolfWare and keep it out of Fuchi's hands. Come to think of it, Fuchi Americas has been hit with a lot of little hostile takeovers recently, hasn't it?
● AAAbacus
"Count on me."

● Way ahead of you. I just pulled a list of the North American companies Fuchi Americas has "lost" over the past four months and looked at who took them over. At least twenty-two companies belonging to Fuchi Americas were taken over or bought outright by companies that belong to Cambridge Holdings.
● Kuroshi

● So Cambridge was going after Fuchi Americas and Villiers shut him down by buying him out. I get it.
● Whatzit

● You're still missing one important piece of the puzzle. Lucas Don had been happily minding his own business with CompuForce for years. Why start expanding suddenly in 2057?
● Beancounter

● Betcha they got money from Dunkelzahn's will. That's why everybody else went nuts in 2057.
● Whatzit

● Nope. No references to Lucas Don, CompuForce or Cambridge Holdings in the Big D's will. I did find a thirty million nuyen cred transfer in late '57 to Cambridge Holdings from Silveril Investments.
● The Dark Wight

● Which belongs to ... (drum roll, please)
● Beancounter

● Richard Villiers. Nice work, Bean.
● FastJack

● I still don't get it.
● Whatzit

● Villiers gave Cambridge Holdings the cred it needed to take over a bunch of subdivisions from Fuchi Americas. Then Villiers takes over Cambridge Holdings, and boom! All the little corps that Fuchi used to own, Villiers now owns directly. Piece by piece, he's stripping Fuchi Americas and adding the pieces into his own little corporate empire.
● AAAbacus
"Count on me."

● And when Nakatomi and Yamana figure it out, things inside Fuchi are going to get even uglier than they already are. The shareholders won't put up with that kind of drek, and Villiers knows it. He's getting ready to abandon Fuchi and leave Yamana and Nakatomi holding the bag.
● Turner

● So Fuchi really is breaking up. Frag, Beanie, how do you figure this stuff out?
● Whatzit

● Elementary, my dear Whatzit.
● Beancounter

WHAT'S GOING DOWN

For more than two decades, Fuchi Industrial Electronics has walked a thin line between success and self-destruction. Three powerful families, none of them accustomed to being thwarted, have run the corporation, and each has expended as much energy opposing the others as fighting rival corporations. The company has remained viable largely because the Nakatomi, Villiers and Yamana families were evenly matched in power. But when security chief Miles Lanier abandoned Fuchi to join the board of Renraku, a crack appeared in Richard Villiers' armor, and the Nakatomis and Yamanas leaped to exploit it. Now the battle for control of Fuchi is on, and it will ultimately tear the corporation apart.

This section describes the history of Fuchi Industrial Electronics, the events that set the corporation's civil war in motion, and the aftermath of the company's destruction.

FUCHI HISTORY

The history of Fuchi Industrial Electronics began in Tokyo in 2011. After recovering from the 1989 collapse of its "bubble economy," Japan had enjoyed a decade or so of consistent, though not spectacular, economic growth. Two of the more successful corporations in Japan were Yamana Electronics and Dekita Industries. Yamana, named after founder Korin Yamana, was a conglomerate of electronics designers, manufacturers and distributors that managed to prosper in Japan's highly competitive electronics industry. Dekita was one of the last of the so-called horizontal

keiretsu, groups of unrelated companies with common shareholders and consistent business relationships built around a single large bank. These two, among the bigger fish in the Japanese pond, looked poised to continue piling up profits for as long as the market could handle it. Then came the Awakening, which shook Japan as hard as it did the rest of the world. With the return of magic causing economic uncertainty as well as social upheaval, Japan's economy started spinning out of control. Half the world, believing that magic would make everyone rich, bet the farm that the economy would skyrocket. Others, convinced that the Awakening would destroy the status quo, began selling short or pulling out of the market entirely. No one knew what to expect, and a wave of takeovers swept through Japan (and the rest of the world) as everyone tried to get a step ahead of their competitors.

When the Pacific Rim Bank moved to take over Dekita Industries, Dekita needed a "white knight" to keep from being swallowed whole. Kiyoshi Nakatomi, Dekita's CEO, knew Korin Yamana from their school days, and the two had maintained a cordial relationship over the years. Yamana was a natural choice to stave off the Pacific Rim takeover attempt; he readily agreed to help Nakatomi out, buying up 49 percent of Dekita's existing stock. Pacific Rim backed off, and it seemed Dekita was safe. However, when Nakatomi tried to buy back the stock, Korin Yamana suggested that the companies should stay together for their mutual benefit, at least until the economy stabilized. Nakatomi began to wonder if he had gotten a bad bargain; however, he had little choice but to accept Yamana's offer.

Despite the beginnings of friction between Nakatomi and Yamana, their companies seemed to work well together. Dekita's stable financial core served as a counterbalance to the volatility of Yamana's electronics business, and Yamana used Dekita's diverse web of businesses to branch out into new markets. Dekita's software division began to grow rapidly; unimpeded by strict antitrust laws, Dekita developed software for Yamana's forthcoming computer hardware before competitors even knew the hardware existed. Despite their growing mutual mistrust, both Nakatomi and Yamana saw the potential profitability in continuing the arrangement, and in 2017 the two companies formally merged into Fuchi Industrial Electronics. That year also marked the beginning of Fuchi's significant international expansion, as the company began opening branch offices in the U.S.A., Canada, Hawai'i, Australia and Hong Kong.

In the late 2020s, the expanding Fuchi conglomerate began to experiment with newly developed cyberterminal technology. With substantial funding from Chobetsu, the Japanese intelligence agency, Fuchi developed one of the first privately designed cyberterminals—a room-sized monstrosity that nonetheless hinted at the enormous potential behind the technology. When the Crash of '29 hit and Echo Mirage demonstrated the full power of the cyberterminal, Fuchi knew that it had to find a way to capitalize on this technology. Nakatomi and Yamana dedicated all their resources to cyberterminal research. Some departments focused on finding a way to defend against the new "cyberhackers" of Echo Mirage, developing the first IC programs, but most concentrated on finding a way to duplicate the abilities of the Echo Mirage team. As it happened, however, the breakthrough that would define Fuchi's future came not from the corporation's research labs, but from an American corporate raider named Richard Villiers.

Matrix Management

Villiers had built a successful career as a corporate shark, securing massive bank loans to buy promising companies, restructure them and sell them off at a (usually) significant profit. He made a comfortable living, but he always kept his eye open for the business that would break him into the big time. As he watched other corporate raiders like Inazo Aneki of Renraku wield ever greater national and international power, Villiers grew increasingly discontented with what he saw as the minor scale of his operations.

He found the opportunity he'd been looking for in his own hometown, with Matrix Systems of Boston—a small but innovative start-up company founded by Ken Roper and Michael Eld, a pair of young computer techs just out of the military. In 2033, Roper and Eld demonstrated their prototype cyberdeck to a small group of Boston businessmen in hopes of attracting investors. The desk-sized prototype was significantly smaller than any previous models seen by the general public. Numerous glitches and an unexpected power failure marred the initial demonstration, which led most potential investors to dismiss Matrix Systems. Villiers, however, immediately recognized the cyberdeck technology's potential and offered to purchase the company and fully fund its research. Eld and Roper rejected the offer; they wanted investment capital, not a buyout. Villiers ultimately accepted their terms and became a 49 percent owner of Matrix Systems—the most the founders would allow.

In early 2034, Matrix Systems produced the Portal, the first cyberdeck available to those outside the Echo Mirage project. Though never advertised or sold in any stores, the Portal's reputation quickly spread among corporate security heads and computer specialists. Within a month of its release, the Portal had produced enough sales revenue that Roper and Eld began preparing to buy Villiers out and take the company public. Villiers, however, had other plans. About six weeks after the Portal was released, Roper was apparently electrocuted in his bath at home; an hour later, while rushing to the hospital to see his partner, Eld was killed in a hit-and-run auto accident. The following morning, employees found the Matrix Systems mainframe crashed, the drives worthless and the backup tapes magnetically erased. All remaining Portal decks and components were also missing. No formal accusations were ever made, but it was widely believed at the time that the UCAS government had silenced Eld and Roper to keep Matrix technology firmly under its own control. The company went into receivership, and Richard Villiers bought the remnants of it for pennies on the dollar.

A month later, Villiers contacted the world's foremost computer research company—Fuchi Industrial Electronics—with a business proposition. Somehow, Villiers had acquired copies of Matrix Systems' mainframe backup tapes, as well as several intact Portal cyberdecks. These items were exactly what Fuchi needed to jump-start its own research and vault the company into the top tier of multinational corporations. Well aware of the value of the

Matrix Systems technology, Villiers demanded a high price for the assets he represented—one-third ownership of Fuchi, as well as control over any future Fuchi acquisitions in North and South America. To sweeten the deal, he offered to place his own already considerable American holdings under the Fuchi umbrella.

Korin Yamana, aware of the tremendous advantage that would come to the first corporation to release a mass-market cyberdeck, urged Kiyoshi Nakatomi to accept Villiers' offer. Nakatomi, however, remembered the Dekita buyout all too well and considered Yamana's enthusiasm suspect. Fearing a repeat of Yamana's early betrayal, Nakatomi used his control over a majority of Fuchi stock to veto the deal.

Three days later, Kiyoshi Nakatomi was murdered by his limousine driver, who was in turn killed before he could be brought to trial. It is still unclear how much Yamana, Villiers or both had to do with Nakatomi's death, but no charges were ever filed against either man. When Kiyoshi's son, Shikei Nakatomi, inherited his father's share of Fuchi, Villiers renewed his original offer. Shikei accepted, and the leadership of Fuchi became a triumvirate. In 2036, Fuchi released the CDT-1000, the first widely available commercial cyberdeck, and a megacorporation was born.

In 2038, after two years of unquestioned dominance in the cybernetic market, Fuchi decided to take the next step. Richard Villiers held a significant percentage of stock in JRJ International, one of the seven megacorporations that founded and controlled the Corporate Court. With his insider's knowledge and Fuchi's financial resources, Villiers purchased JRJ and incorporated it into the American branch of the Fuchi corporate empire, vaulting Fuchi onto the Corporate Court and greatly expanding the corporation's influence. Fuchi's three major shareholders settled into an uneasy balance of power, with Villiers dominating Fuchi Americas, Yamana controlling Fuchi Pan-Europa and Nakatomi retaining control of Fuchi Asia. The future looked bright, with no outside competitors apparently able to slow the corporation down. Internal problems, however, still lurked beneath the surface.

Where There's A Will

For nearly twenty years, the Villiers, Yamana and Nakatomi factions of Fuchi remained carefully balanced against one another, each striving to gain an advantage over the others without disrupting the company's overall profits. Despite their mutual mistrust and sometimes open animosity, the three executives managed to keep Fuchi near the top of the megacorporate ladder—until 2057, when Dunkelzahn's last will and testament disrupted that careful balance with two unexpected developments. The first was a gift of four million shares of Renraku stock to Miles Lanier, Fuchi's head of security and Villiers' close personal friend; the second was a gift of a hundred thousand shares of Fuchi stock to Richard Villiers. These bequests threw Fuchi into an uproar.

Dunkelzahn's will proved a mixed blessing for Villiers. The dragon's gift to him amounted to roughly 2 percent of available Fuchi stock—not enough to give him control of the corporation, but enough to solidify his lead over Yamana and Nakatomi as Fuchi's primary shareholder and put him in the driver's seat for the foreseeable future. However, Lanier's departure for the Renraku board of directors left Fuchi without its top security asset and

Villiers without his right-hand man. To make matters worse, shortly after Lanier joined the Renraku board, Renraku released a series of IC programs that bore a striking similarity to Fuchi's own cutting-edge prototypes. As 2058 wore on, Renraku released more and more cutting-edge software and interface technology in fields traditionally dominated by Fuchi. It seemed clear that Miles Lanier had thrown his lot in with Renraku and was leading his new corporation past the security measures he himself had put in place at Fuchi. This apparent act of treason cost Villiers a significant amount of prestige, and Yamana and Nakatomi eagerly attacked his perceived weakness.

For the first time in years, two branches of the Fuchi megacorp worked together toward a common goal—in this case, the weakening of Richard Villiers' hold on "their" company. Internal stock manipulations, management purges and the like plagued Fuchi throughout 2058 as the two Japanese families struggled to increase their power at Villiers' expense; Villiers, in turn, suspected that his days at Fuchi were numbered. He began to conduct investigations and purges throughout Fuchi Americas, ostensibly looking for pro-Lanier factions, but actually more concerned with removing employees who favored Nakatomi or Yamana. Meanwhile, Villiers took steps to establish his own corporate empire, independent of Fuchi, based in his hometown of Boston. All the while, increasing pressure from fast-climbing Renraku kept Fuchi's leaders fighting a two-front war.

More trouble surfaced briefly in early 2059, when Carlos Consuni of the Liberal Catholic Voters Party apparently won the Philippines election by a sizable number of votes. Because Fuchi had provided and volunteered to monitor the electronic voting apparatus; suspicions of fraud centered on Fuchi Industrial Electronics. The dragon Masaru, who had strongly backed opposition candidate Filipa Salonga, alleged that Fuchi's internal problems had distracted it sufficiently for massive vote fraud to occur on its watch. Others were less charitable, taking at face value allegations that Fuchi was among Consuni's many secret corporate backers. When the imperial governor of the Philippines refused Masaru's demand for a re-vote, Fuchi Asia executives feared an outbreak of violence and began closing down operations with the potential to be affected by these events. Though the anticipated mass riots did not occur, attacks on corporate installations by pirates and other anti-Japanese factions escalated, further weakening Fuchi's ability to weather Renraku's inroads into its markets.

By mid-2059, Fuchi faced a stark choice: mount some sort of defense against Renraku or be overrun. In an apparent stalling tactic, Fuchi called an emergency face-to-face meeting of the Corporate Court. For eighteen hours, Zurich-Orbital lay under a communications blackout. On Earth, speculations and tensions ran high as Fuchi and Renraku maneuvered corporate-owned military units in an elaborate strategic dance. Finally, the Court rendered its decision; it ordered Miles Lanier to sell his Renraku stock to the Zurich-Orbital Gemeinschaft Bank at slightly below market value, resign from Renraku's board of directors and turn himself over to Fuchi security. Fuchi, in turn, received orders to pay Renraku an unspecified amount in reparations for Miles Lanier's actions. Though the events behind this decision were never made public, the results enabled Fuchi to hold Renraku at bay for a while longer. The Court's decision implied, and many Fuchi shareholders came to believe, that Villiers had run an elaborate scam against Renraku with Lanier's assistance—a scheme that could easily have backfired on the shareholders. Others viewed Villiers as the company's savior from a Renraku takeover. Pro- and anti-Villiers factions began to form within the company, quickly making the internal tensions too strong to overcome.

Death of A Megacorp

With Renraku no longer a threat, the three factions within Fuchi once more devoted all their attention to casting one another down. Yamana and Nakatomi began conducting purges of their holdings in Europe and Asia, attempting to weed out Villiers' influence on their divisions. Meanwhile, Villiers' Boston-based corporation grew by leaps and bounds as he staged "hostile takeovers" in which shell companies belonging to him acquired portions of Fuchi Americas. Shadow activity within Fuchi shot up, with certain cities serving as focal points for the corporation's undeclared civil war. Tokyo, home of Fuchi's corporate headquarters, suddenly saw more covert activity than it had since the seventeenth century. In Boston, Yamana and Nakatomi began striking against Villiers wherever they could, not to increase their own power but to weaken their opponent. Seattle became a battleground, a strategically important city in which neither side could claim a significant edge. San Francisco also saw more than its share of intra-Fuchi conflict; though Villiers dominated most of Fuchi's North American operations, Nakatomi and Yamana intended to keep San Francisco under control as the Japanese factions' foothold on the continent.

In July of 2059, Flight 1118—a semiballistic flight bound from Tokyo to Seattle—suffered an unexplained guidance malfunction, missed Sea-Tac Airport by twenty-five miles and crashed into the Redmond Barrens near the Salish-Shidhe border. In addition to the 153 passengers and crew, the crash killed 51 people on the ground; the resulting explosion and fires severely injured hundreds more and destroyed acres of property and city infrastructure. Corporate Court justice David Hague, one of Fuchi's two justices, was seen boarding the flight in Tokyo, but Hague's body was not found at the crash site. Inexplicably, it was discovered in an abandoned Redmond apartment building a week after the crash. Hague backed the Yamana family; his death left Lynn Osborne, a Villiers supporter, as Fuchi's only Corporate Court representative. The following month, Li Feng of Wuxing, Inc. was elected to the Court in Hague's place, effectively eliminating any Yamana or Nakatomi influence over the Court. Naturally, they suspected Villiers of arranging the crash, but insufficient evidence existed for arrests, either within Villiers' camp or among the numerous terrorist organizations that claimed responsibility.

By October of 2059, Villiers had subsumed most of Fuchi Americas into his personal portfolio, which he incorporated under the name of Novatech. Villiers then simultaneously announced Novatech's existence and sold off half his Fuchi stock on the open market. The massive sale caused Fuchi's stock price to plunge, then skyrocket as Yamana and Nakatomi engaged in a bidding war for enough of it to give one of them a controlling interest in Fuchi. Once the stock reached roughly triple its original price,

Villiers sold the remainder, pocketed tens of millions of nuyen in profit and left Fuchi Industrial Electronics forever. Justice Lynn Osborne threw her lot in with Novatech, leaving Fuchi with no justices on the Corporate Court. Yamana and Nakatomi immediately petitioned the Court to have Osborne replaced, citing a statement in the Court's charter that each of its founding megacorps must have at least one representative on the Court. In a final twist of the knife for Fuchi's remaining partners, however, Osborne pointed out that JRJ International, not Fuchi, helped found the Court—and that JRJ was a wholly owned subsidiary of Novatech, Inc. The Court agreed with this logic and permitted Osborne to remain as a voice for Novatech.

The losses devastated Fuchi. Fuchi Americas, fully a third of its assets, had disappeared virtually overnight, and months of internal conflict had weakened Fuchis Pan-Europa and Asia. The corporation's two remaining founders spent massive amounts of cash and other resources struggling for sole control of what was left, effectively costing Fuchi its AAA status along with its presence on the Corporate Court. Though Fuchi remained an economic force to be reckoned with in Asia and Europe, it had no real hope of regaining its status as the second-largest corporation in the world.

By the time the stock frenzy ended, Korin Yamana and Shikei Nakatomi each controlled roughly 49 percent of Fuchi's stock. The remaining 2 percent belonged to Samantha Villiers, Richard Villiers' ex-wife and now vice president in charge of Novatech Northwest. Well aware of the dangers inherent in becoming Fuchi's tie breaker, Samantha requested a meeting with Yamana and Nakatomi in January of 2060. After an extensive, closed-door session, Samantha Villiers sold her Fuchi stock to Korin Yamana, giving him the controlling interest he had sought for four decades. In return, Yamana agreed to a one-year truce between Fuchi and Novatech, during which each corporation pledged not to interfere in each other's business activities. The agreement benefited both corporations; Novatech needed time to establish itself and Fuchi needed time to rebuild.

Shikei Nakatomi, however, saw things otherwise. His hatred for Villiers had gradually become the dominant force in his life. He blamed Richard Villiers for starting the internal conflicts that tore his family's corporation apart, and also for Samantha Villiers' decision to give control of Fuchi to Korin Yamana, the man who first tried to steal Fuchi away from the Nakatomis. Yamana agreed to leave Villiers alone for a time, but Nakatomi rejected this truce. He began to make overtures toward Renraku Corporation, whose long-time rivalry with Villiers' one-third of Fuchi had turned to active antagonism after the Miles Lanier debacle. In April of 2060, after numerous thwarted attempts, Nakatomi finally purchased four million shares of Renraku stock from the Zurich-Orbital Gemeinschaft Bank—the same shares that Miles Lanier had sold the bank a year earlier. Fuchi Asia officially joined the Renraku corporate empire (see **Track 2: Neck and Neck**, p. 35). Finally, after forty years of almost constant effort (and because he was the only one left), Yamana had succeeded in making Fuchi Pan-Europa the head of Fuchi Industrial Electronics—and it didn't matter that he presided over the remnants of the once-mighty corporation in what others might call a hollow victory.

The new Fuchi, concentrated almost exclusively in Europe and northern Africa, dropped from a first-tier megacorporation to a third-tier has-been. The ninety-year-old Yamana had no interest in rebuilding from scratch and could see the wolves circling around his crippled corporation. Rather than watch Fuchi fall victim to a hostile takeover, he chose to cut his own deal. In a nationally televised ceremony, Yamana married Mirsuko Shiawase, the thirty-year-old head of Shiawase Envirotech's Philippines division, who also happened to be the cousin of Shiawase's CEO and the niece of the chairman of the megacorp's board. Yamana then sold Fuchi to Shiawase in its entirety, in exchange for a substantial chunk of Shiawase stock and a seat on the board of directors. Mitsuko returned to the Philippines, while Yamana moved to the Shiawase executive arcology in Osaka to begin his new career.

On 28 July 2060, Fuchi Industrial Electronics officially ceased to exist

THE PLAYERS

This section describes the corporations and the major non-player characters who play a part in the Fuchi track of the **Blood in the Boardroom** story line, outlining their roles, motivations and plans. The gamemaster can use these characters in the adventures provided in this section or as background material for other shadowruns involving the world of the megacorps.

NOVATECH, INCORPORATED

President/CEO: Richard Villiers
Headquarters: Boston, Massachusetts, UCAS

Business Profile:

Combining the North and South American portions of Fuchi Industrial Electronics with Richard Villiers' personal empire, Novatech reflects the natures of the companies from which it was formed. Its greatest strength, predictably, lies in the fields of Matrix hardware and software. Many of Fuchi's best and brightest programmers and developers made the jump to Novatech, joining those from the many smaller software development firms that Villiers owned. Villiers also kept control of Fuchi's Orbital Division, which, combined with Walker Aerodesign of Boston and other small companies, makes Novatech a leader in the aerospace field. Novatech also possesses significant interests in the military/security field and a small but growing magical research division.

As a new player among the megacorps, Novatech has yet to solidify its relationships with its fellow corporations. Renraku is the company's biggest rival, for professional and personal reasons, while Ares Macrotechnology has adopted a wait-and-see attitude. Most of the other AAA corporations see Novatech as just another competitor, albeit one with a more interesting history than most. The company makes no official reference to its history with Fuchi, but most people see Novatech's starburst logo as a play on Fuchi's star emblem.

Richard Villiers

Though he may lack the sheer, visible power of Damien Knight, Kyle Haeffner or Nadja Daviar, Richard Villiers is undoubtedly one of the most respected—and feared—men in the UCAS

His ability to talk his way into one-third ownership of Fuchi and exercise greater control over the company than the formidable Korin Yamana and Shikei Nakatomi demonstrated his talent for shrewd business practices. But the true extent of his gifts did not become clear until 2059. Within six months, Villiers managed to send Renraku's stock into a steep nosedive (see **Track 2: Neck and Neck**), prod Fuchi into self-destruction and turn his own financial empire into a top tier megacorporation. His ability to manipulate people and events has become legendary: many knowledgeable observers still believe he engineered Kiyoshi Nakatomi's death all those years ago, even though no conclusive proof of his involvement exists. Though Novatech is one of the smallest corporations ever to earn AAA status, those who know Richard Villiers have no doubt that he can hold his own against the rest of the top-tier corps.

Miles Lanier

Dunkelzahn's will sent Miles Lanier to Renraku as a board member, and Fuchi's former head of security proved his new corporate loyalties many times over by providing Renraku with valuable insider information on Fuchi Americas. Renraku leaped ahead of the tech curve while the Fuchi fortunes practically careened downhill, a situation that finally prompted Fuchi to formally accuse Renraku of massive corporate espionage. Though the Court proceedings were never made public, its decision proved quite costly for Renraku and profitable for Richard Villiers (see **Track 2: Neck and Neck**), and it came as no great surprise when Villiers chose Miles Lanier as Novatech's director of security. The two men's long-standing friendship seemed to fracture when Lanier left for Renraku, but the relationship appears mended now. Since the incorporation of Novatech, Lanier has spent most of his time traveling to New York, Seattle and other areas where Fuchi subsidiaries are being retooled as Novatech divisions. Lanier personally oversees many interviews with senior management and ruthlessly purges any executives who show signs of loyalty to the Yamana or Nakatomi families. He is also helping his hand-picked security team redesign physical site and Matrix security measures in order to close any back doors that Fuchi's other erstwhile owners might use against Novatech.

Samantha Villiers

Though she divorced Richard Villiers more than ten years ago, Samantha Villiers remains a loyal and valuable part of her ex-husband's corporate empire. After her successful stint as vice president of Fuchi Systems Design, she was promoted to head up Fuchi Northwest, and now serves as vice president of Novatech Northwest. She is extremely wealthy and has an excellent head for business: a friend of the family once said that "Sam and Richard got divorced because they were too smart for each other. If they'd stayed together, they'd have killed each other." Now in her late forties, Samantha is an attractive woman with a razor-sharp wit and is considered one of Seattle's most eligible singles. She has shown no inclination to remarry, however, apparently preferring to focus all of her attention on her work.

Darren Villiers

Richard Villiers' younger brother Darren is a lesser-known member of the Villiers family. At Fuchi, he held the position of senior vice president in charge of Seattle operations, but he spent little time in his office at Fuchi's Seattle headquarters and was rarely seen even by his secretary. A physical adept with a knack for stealth and burglary, Darren worked more often as an operative than as an executive. Richard and Samantha Villiers employed him as a covert agent for operations that required detailed knowledge of Fuchi's corporate strategy—knowledge that could not be trusted to outside assets. Acting alone or with a team of shadowrunners unaware of his identity, Darren specialized in acquiring blackmail material on Seattle politicians and rival executives. Now serving as Novatech's Seattle director of special assets, Darren hires others to do most of the dirty work, though he still occasionally handles particularly sensitive missions himself. Darren is a dwarf, the only known metahuman in Richard Villiers' family, and a Grade 3 magical initiate.

RENRAKU COMPUTER SYSTEMS

President/CEO: Inazo Aneki
Headquarters: Chiba, Japan

Business Profile:

See **Track 2: Neck and Neck** for details of Renraku's business operations and significant personalities.

SHIAWASE CORPORATION

President/CEO: Tadashi Shiawase
Headquarters: Osaka, Japan

Business Profile:

Possibly the largest family-owned business in the world, Shiawase is a curious mix of ultramodern business practices and ancient Japanese traditions. The first of the megacorps, Shiawase paved the way for other large multinational corporations to step beyond the reach of national governments. Though less influential than other megas in the UCAS and the rest of the Western world, Shiawase commands enormous clout in India, Australia, the Philippines and many Chinese nation-states. Experts once estimated that Shiawase controlled a staggering 30 percent of all business in Asia outside of Japan, and the corp managed to increase this market share while rival corps Fuchi and Renraku were busy fighting each other. The rise of the Pacific Prosperity Group (see **Track 4: Out of the East**) has reduced Shiawase's dominance somewhat as Pacific Rim businesses begin to provide alternative distribution channels for locally produced goods. However, the addition of Korin Yamana and his Fuchi holdings to the Shiawase empire has given Shiawase a significant foothold in Europe, where it previously held only a nominal presence.

Though as ruthless as any other megacorp in its business dealings, Shiawase displays a fierce loyalty to its employees—and vice versa. All of the company's major shareholders are members of the Shiawase family by blood or marriage, as are many of the corp's executives and division managers. Even rank-and-file employees are regarded as part of Shiawase's corporate family.

and employee satisfaction surveys show that most are extremely happy with their jobs and the company. The family members at the core of the corporation, however, are less content: they seem to spend as much time backstabbing one another as trying to advance the corporation's interests.

Sadato Shiawase

Sadato is the chairman of Shiawase's board and the current head of the Shiawase family. He presents a stern but compassionate face to the general public, emphasizing Shiawase's family-oriented policies and deep concern for each employee's well being. The truth is somewhat less appealing. Sadato is a hard nosed, uncompromising businessman who wishes he could buy a controlling interest in the rest of his family. His main enemy is his sister, Soko Shiawase, with whom he has feuded since at least 2051. Though they present a unified public front, brother and sister interact with each other primarily through assassination attempts.

Tadashi Shiawase

Sadato's son Tadashi acts as the corporation's president and CEO, though his father continues to wield the real power in the company. When given the opportunity, Tadashi usually rejects his father's bottom-line mentality, but he dares not push too hard lest his father replace him as CEO. Tadashi has the potential to become a capable executive, but he is unlikely to come into his own until his father retires (a long shot at best) or dies. His one weakness is his daughter Hiromi, a reckless teenager who takes great delight in escaping her bodyguards and getting into trouble. She has nearly died as a result of her escapades on at least one occasion.

Korin Yamana

When Samantha Villiers sold him enough stock to give him control over Fuchi Industrial Electronics, Yamana achieved the goal he had sought for more than forty years. Unfortunately, his victory proved to be short-lived. For the first few months afterward, Yamana operated more or less on autopilot, first working to keep Fuchi independent, then trying to arrange the best possible deal when it became apparent that such independence could not be sustained. After consummating the deal with Shiawase, Yamana had time to stop and think about what he wanted—a luxury he had not possessed in years. Though corporate intrigue still holds some appeal for him, Yamana finds himself increasingly tempted to retire—perhaps to Zurich-Orbital, perhaps to a quiet mansion in some secluded spot. For now, he plans to continue overseeing Fuchi's integration into the Shiawase empire. Not even Yamana knows what he will do once that task is completed.

Mitsuko Shiawase-Yamana

The youngest daughter of Soko Shiawase, Mitsuko is the vice president in charge of Shiawase Envirotech's Philippines division. Her mother has charged her to stop the assaults by anti-Japanese rebels and pirates on Shiawase's Philippine installations, and Mitsuko has the power and intelligence to do it. Dispassionate and analytical, Mitsuko is fiercely devoted to her mother first and Shiawase second. Anything beyond that, she evaluates in practi

cal rather than emotional terms. She recognizes that her marriage to Korin Yamana was an act of economic expediency and knows that Yamana feels the same way. Though she respects her husband's abilities as an executive, there is no love or even fondness in their relationship. The two live separately and rarely speak to each other.

Shigeru Aoyama

Shiawase's president of Seattle operations, Shigeru Aoyama is almost invariably described as "a typical corporate executive." Even those who work for him find it difficult to describe anything distinctive about him. He runs Shiawase's Seattle activities efficiently, but not exceptionally so; his subordinates and peers respect him, but not exceedingly so; he hires shadowrunners to advance the corporation's agenda, but not with any unusual frequency. His personal history contains no trace of crime, scandal, abuse or impropriety, and he has no known talent as a magician, decker, soldier or anything other than a corporate sarariman. Naturally, this exceptionally mundane personal history has given rise to rumors that he is a yakuza operative, shapeshifter, free spirit, insect spirit, toxic shaman, disguised dragon or any number of other esoteric beings. No trace of evidence to support any of these rumors has ever been found.

ADVENTURE FRAMEWORKS

This section presents several adventures in an outline format for the gamemaster to develop and use. All of the frameworks draw upon the background material and major characters described in this track.

CRASH TEAM

Premise

In early July 2059, the player characters are assigned to "detain" David Hague, Fuchi's Corporate Court justice, when he arrives in Seattle on a late-night flight from Tokyo. They are to intercept Hague and bring him to a safe house in Redmond, where their Mr. Johnson will take over the operation. Unfortunately, Hague is aboard the ill-fated Flight 1118, which crashes into the Redmond Barrens at a speed of more than three hundred kilometers per hour. The runners are ordered to retrieve Hague's body from the crash site. In the process, the runners must contend with airport security, unbelievable traffic, roads blocked with chunks of rubble and dead bodies or else completely obliterated, swarming news media, paramedics, Metroplex Guardsmen, panicked survivors, scattered wildfires and a highly trained team of operatives who seem to have known the crash was coming ... .

Setup

The characters' fixer says she has a high-profile, high-profit job for them that requires careful planning and subtle execution, but hopefully no gunplay. If the runners accept, she puts them in touch with Mr. Johnson, who wants them to abduct David Hague when he returns home from Tokyo the following week. The Johnson offers an attractive sum in exchange for the snatch; he specifies that the runners must take Hague before he reaches Fuchi's Seattle offices and that they must keep him alive. Mr. Johnson is working for Richard Villiers, who suspects that Hague knows too much about Villiers' plans to secede from Fuchi.

Legwork indicates that security inside the airport and at Fuchi's downtown headquarters is very tight. The best place for the kidnapping is probably on the road between those two locations. Give the runners time to come up with a general plan, but don't let them get too bogged down in details—events will shortly render their plans moot.

While waiting for Hague's flight to arrive, the runners see airport personnel burst into a flurry of activity. Emergency vehicles pull onto the runways, then abruptly wheel around and tear off through the airport gates. Airline employees look horrified at some unknown news. Security personnel immediately go into high alert, and many begin to cluster around the gate where Hague's flight is due to arrive. Anyone able to tap into the airport's secure comm frequencies will hear references to Flight 1118 as an "overshot." Passengers and people waiting for flights begin to ask what's going on, but airport personnel aren't giving out any answers. Suddenly, the reason for all the tension becomes clear as Flight 1118 thunders low over—and then past—the airport, plunging toward the eastern horizon at tremendous speed. Moments later, a huge fireball lights up the night sky, and sirens begin to wail all over the city.

Event 1

Immediately after the crash, the runners get a call from an uneasy Mr. Johnson, who instructs them to go to the crash site and recover Hague's briefcase (the first priority) and/or his body. The runners may be able to squeeze more money out of the Johnson, who is anxious to recover Hague and his equipment before anyone else does. Any runners on the airport grounds must make their escape before pedestrian and vehicle traffic becomes impassable, and without attracting the attention of airport security personnel (who are watching for anyone who might somehow be connected with the crash).

Getting to the crash site is a challenge in itself. Every DocWagon ambulance, Lone Star patrol vehicle and Franklin Associates fire truck in Seattle is heading toward the same place, along with every reporter, rubbernecker, Good Samaritan and ghoul within twenty miles, not to mention the families and friends of those on the flight. The Metroplex Guard is being mobilized to help secure the site, and Ares, Fed-Boeing and other corporations are sending help as well. Go-gangs are taking advantage of the distraction to run wild while Lone Star is occupied elsewhere. In other words, the runners are facing the worst traffic nightmare Seattle has seen since the Night of Rage. Ground travel to the crash site is simply not feasible, though the runners may suffer through a few unpleasant encounters before they realize this. Runners without an alternate means of transportation can call on Mr. Johnson for help; he will arrange for a Hughes Stallion helicopter to pick them up atop a nearby parking deck and take them to the crash site. Depending on the gamemaster's mood, getting to the parking garage may be an adventure as well.

Event 2

Upon arrival at the crash site, the runners must decide how to deal with the chaos there. The downed semiballistic lies scattered in four large pieces (and a few million smaller ones) over several square miles of the Redmond Barrens. The plane apparently first hit in James Lake, where the tail section broke off and is now almost completely submerged. The front third or so of the aircraft plowed into the side of a hill several miles east of the lake. Between these locations is a wide swath of blood, shattered bodies, broken glass, twisted metal and fire. Casualties, paramedics, police and reporters are everywhere along Flight 1118's path of destruction.

The runners know that Hague had a first-class ticket, which means he was probably in the front of the plane. When they arrive at the hillside where the plane's nose section came to rest, they see what appears to be a DocWagon Crisis Response Team searching through the wreckage. The runners may notice several things wrong with this picture, however. First of all, the CRT ambulance has clearly arrived on the scene from the east side, whereas all the other rescue vehicles are coming from the west. Second, the paramedics are carrying silenced SMGs; not unusual for a team responding to a high-threat situation, but odd for a disaster of this type. Third, and most telling, when another DocWagon crisis team arrives shortly after the runners do, the armed team responds to the newcomers' greetings with a barrage of gunfire. The "crisis team" first on the scene is actually a team of covert operatives working for Renraku, and they are also looking for David Hague.

Shortly after the gunfire erupts between the DocWagon vehicles, two of the Renraku agents emerge from the plane wreckage carrying David Hague's body between them. A briefcase bearing the Corporate Court logo dangles from Hague's wrist; as the runners watch, a third operative steps up and cuts the case away from the corpse. The team quickly boards their "ambulance" and departs, leaving the player characters with a difficult choice to make. If they follow in the helicopter, they will be fairly obvious to their quarry. However, the only other readily available vehicle is the real DocWagon ambulance, and taking that will make the treatment of any survivors that much more difficult. The real DocWagon team is also feeling defensive after being shot at and will not simply stand by if the runners try to appropriate their ambulance. Finally, the sounds of gunfire will almost certainly attract the attention of nearby Lone Star officers and Metroplex Guardsmen. Whatever way the runners choose to follow Hague, they had better do it quickly.

Event 3

The runners follow the Renraku team to an abandoned apartment building several miles from the crash site. (If the Renraku agents are aware that they are being followed, they will contact their headquarters and set up an ambush or some other equally unpleasant surprise for the runners.) Once inside, the Renraku operatives immediately go up to a second-floor room where two cyberware implant technicians await them. The techs begin a careful operation to remove Hague's headware memory—they're not worried about harming Hague's dead body, but they don't want to damage the cyber equipment. Meanwhile, one of the operatives tries to pry open the locked briefcase while the other four stand guard. In order to achieve their mission, the runners must get past the guards and reclaim Hague's body, the briefcase or both, and then escape to meet Mr. Johnson and hand over the goods before Renraku reinforcements arrive.

Climax

Upon reaching their Johnson, the runners receive orders to return Hague's body to the crash site. If they have dragged the body with them, they face the herculean task of spiriting it from the meeting place to the crash site through an urban wasteland of still-burning wildfires and rubble-choked, people-clogged or non-existent streets—all without attracting unwanted attention from law-enforcement authorities, DocWagon teams, reporters, curiosity seekers and ambulance chasers. If they didn't bring the body, they must face all this plus the Renraku strike team that will have arrived at the safe house in the interim to guard the prize. One way or another, the runners are likely to end up in a massive gun battle, either with Renraku agents or with law-enforcement personnel intent on keeping everyone away from the crash site.

Sequels

It turns out that someone sabotaged Flight 1118's internal guidance systems, leading the pilots to miscalculate the location of Sea-Tac Airport. Renraku plants rumors that Richard Villiers engineered the crash; the runners may play a role in Villiers' attempts to clear his name.

If the runners stole the DocWagon ambulance, that company will try to track them down. In addition to the value of the ambulance and the medical gear and drugs it contained, the ambulance's absence from the crash site may have cost some victims their lives (and cost DocWagon some PR). DocWagon also wants to find out who was imitating their people at the crash site, and the runners are their best lead. Finally, reporters who came to cover the crash may have recorded the runners' actions on trideo. Depending on the runners' behavior, this type of publicity could be a major reputation booster, a minor inconvenience or unwanted public exposure.

DocWagon Alternate Campaign

Players who want to play DocWagon characters will be assigned to retrieve Hague's body. As a dignitary on the Corporate Court, Hague had money and clout enough to merit the highest possible level of DocWagon coverage, and the medical corporation will spare no expense or effort to rescue him, even though the severity of the crash makes it very unlikely that he survived. (They have their image to consider, after all.) A DocWagon team will face somewhat less difficulty than runners in getting to the crash site: a med-evac helicopter will be at their disposal, and neither Lone Star nor the Metroplex Guard is interested in hindering medical personnel. However, they must still contend with the Renraku operatives on-site, and have no choice but to follow them when they abscond with Hague's body. Unless the DocWagon operatives retrieve Hague's body as ordered, their jobs are on the line. (For more information on running a DocWagon campaign, see pp. 110–113, **Shadowrun Companion.**)

LOOSE LIPS FRY CHIPS

Premise

A decker friend of the runners, known as HAL, has an unfortunate run-in with some experimental psychotropic black IC that Fuchi Asia is working on. The IC makes him spill everything he knows about all sorts of shadow operations to anyone who will listen—including his most recent one, in which he stumbled across evidence of Fuchi Asia's upcoming moves in that corp's brewing civil war. Fuchi Asia wants HAL silenced but prefers to take him alive so that they can find out exactly how their IC worked before they kill him. Meanwhile, the other two Fuchi factions want to lay their hands on HAL in order to find out what he knows. And everyone HAL has ever worked with wants to shut him up before he sells their secrets for the price of a soybeer.

Setup

One or more of the runners bumps into HAL at a decker hangout or shadow bar. A freelance decker, HAL has worked with almost every shadowrunner in town. Normally a friendly but quiet sort, he's talking up a storm tonight. At first he chats about new programs he's written, an interesting sculpted system he saw recently and other such trivia. Then he starts discussing a recent run he made on a Fuchi host in San Francisco. He describes the run in all its glorious, illegal detail. Loudly. In a public place. He even boasts of how much nuyen he managed to skim from Fuchi's accounts and then starts talking about a few other interesting things he found in Fuchi's system. Many of the shadier denizens of the club take notice, and more than a few excuse themselves to make some phone calls. The characters should realize that something is wrong. If they ask HAL about it, he says something like, "I can't seem to stop myself. Which reminds me of the time we sabotaged that Aztechnology munitions factory back in '56 . . ."

While in that Fuchi system in San Francisco, HAL ran afoul of some prototype psychotropic black IC code-named "Stoolie." It works in a manner similar to truth serum, by removing the victim's interest in keeping anything secret. However, it is much more effective than a chemical; the victim will blithely tell the truth about any and all subjects, no matter how personally harmful doing so may be for him. In HAL's case, fatal harm is likely; Fuchi Asia has a vested interest in keeping their plans secret and will silence him by any means necessary. The Matrix R&D division would like to examine him first, but making sure he doesn't spill the beans is Fuchi Asia's top priority.

Event 1

While the runners are trying to decide what to do with HAL, a group of uniformed security personnel working for Fuchi Asia enters the club. Half the patrons quickly squeeze themselves into the shadows, but HAL stays in his seat and keeps talking. He is clearly aware of the goon squad's arrival and nervous about what they might do, but he can't seem to shut up. Unless the runners help him escape, the Fuchi guards arrest HAL for violation of their Matrix assets. They intend to take him back to a secure facility and pick his brain apart. (Once the lab rats have gotten all the research data they need from HAL, then the Fuchi Asia goon squad will kill him.)

The runners should realize that in his present condition, HAL will spill his guts about every shadowrunner he knows, including them. Helping him escape from Fuchi is in everyone's best interest.

Event 2

The runners and HAL (or HAL and the Fuchi goons, if the runners don't help HAL) have barely hit the street when two more Fuchi security teams show up. These two are from Fuchi Americas and Pan-Europa, and each of them wants HAL alive—and in good enough condition to be able to spill his guts. Luckily for the runners and their hapless friend, both factions are as interested in keeping HAL out of the opposition's hands as they are in dealing with the runners. When the Fuchi Asia squad exits the club

(assuming the runners slipped out of the bar with HAL), a two-way fight becomes a three-way free-for-all, in which each gang of Fuchi goons tries to target the runners and each other. The runners should be able to use the chaos to slip away with HAL, though they may have to trade some gunfire first. Of course, once the Fuchi teams realize that their prize has gotten away, they will break from combat and head off in pursuit ...

Event 3

Once the runners get HAL to something like safety (at least for the moment), they need to figure out what happened to him. Any reasonably competent decker, street doc or psychoanalyst should be able to hazard a guess at the nature of HAL's affliction. Unfortunately, by this time, word has begun to get around, and HAL's former partners start to come out of the woodwork to ask him questions like, "How much paydata did you really get on that Manadyne run?" and "What's the combination for that safe in your apartment?" HAL will freely admit to ripping off his former partners, hacking the credit rating of the street samurai who annoyed him once, sleeping with other runners' girlfriends and a hundred other sins likely to get him beaten or killed. Half of HAL's friends want to take him somewhere quiet and interrogate him, while the other half want to kill him now before he spills any of their secrets. At some point, whether when heading for HAL's apartment, leaving the doctor's office or elsewhere on the streets, the runners should get involved in a big brawl over who gets HAL.

Climax

HAL vaguely remembers seeing something about a psychotropic counter-conditioning program while he was in the Fuchi system and thinks it may solve his problem. He also remembers enough about the secret plans he saw to realize that he stumbled on something very, very big—big enough to be worth quite a bit to various other corporate bidders, but also to be his death warrant. This particular paydata may be a death warrant for the runners as well; whether HAL tells them anything understandable about it or not, Fuchi is likely to assume they know everything, and want them silenced accordingly.

The player characters can easily find the counterprogram in Fuchi Asia's San Francisco host, but it is booby-trapped with trace IC. The program also asks for the current physical location of whoever downloads it; if HAL is on the run to recover the counterprogram, he will answer the question truthfully. One way or another, more Fuchi strike teams will move in to grab HAL. If he's in a less public place this time, the Fuchi Americas and Pan-Europa teams will play hardball in order to recover him for "debriefing." The Fuchi Asia team will try to kill him outright—and none of the warring factions has any compunction about killing the runners.

Sequels

If HAL or the runners survive, all of the Fuchi factions remain on their trail—Fuchi Asia still wants them dead, while the other two factions still want to pick their brains. Fuchi Americas, which developed the original "Stoolie IC" prototypes, will also want to talk to those who know what happened to HAL.

With time and a little therapy, HAL will be as good as new. In the meantime, however, the gamemaster can use HAL to reveal any number of secrets that the runners would rather leave buried: forgotten plot threads from previous adventures or interesting leads to possible future adventures. Once HAL is cured, he may choose to keep that knowledge to himself for a while. Instead, he may tell various friends and enemies "the truth" in order to repay them for past abuses.

BLACK OPERATIONS

Premise

Rumor has it that Fuchi is the only entity in the world to own and operate two delta clinics—black clinics on the monowire edge of modern cybertechnology. One of these clinics, allegedly controlled by the Villiers faction, is secretly located inside the Pueblo Corporate Council. When Fuchi begins to dissolve, Villiers' control over the facility becomes unpredictable, as key personnel resist being purged or replaced. The Yamana faction of Fuchi wants to wrest control of the clinic away from Villiers and launches a black operation. Unable to risk using Fuchi troops and assets for fear of alerting their rival factions, they resort to hiring mercenaries and shadowrunners for the job.

Setup

The runners are contacted by one of the best connected and most prestigious fixers in their home city. He arranges a meeting in a well-guarded, ultra-secure location, impressing upon the runners the need for extraordinary discretion. At the meet, the fixer offers the runners an exceptional amount of nuyen for a difficult penetration job, plus a bonus if the runners maintain complete silence about it. Until the runners accept, he tells them only that it involves travel to and action within a Native American nation, and that they will receive more than adequate support.

Once they accept the job, the fixer will provide maps and details of the target facility and arrange for appropriate gear. The runners' mission is to hijack a supply helicopter and masquerade as the flight crew to get inside the facility, then proceed to the site's command center and assume control. The fixer carefully makes no mention of Fuchi or delta clinics. In addition to the need for stealth, the clinic is hideously expensive and every staff member and piece of equipment invaluable, and so the fixer will order the runners to use as little violence as possible, offering another bonus scaled to the amount of bloodshed and destruction they cause or avoid. Once they have control of the command center, they will allow a mercenary unit to seize control of the rest of the facility with as little bloodshed and collateral damage as possible. If the operation must be aborted, the runners' secondary objective is to extract certain personnel from the facility; the fixer gives them their targets' pictures and certain identifying information.

Event 1

The fixer arranges transportation to get the runners to Santa Fe, where they are told to meet a contact at a private hangar. The contact gives them standard Fuchi uniforms, identification and sidearms. If the team lacks a rigger, a merc rigger named Leonides joins the runners here. The helicopter they need to hijack will be lifting off

shortly from a Fuchi hangar on the other side of the airport. That hangar is protected by a team of well-armed Fuchi security guards, plus a half-dozen laborers and pilots. The runners are told not to worry about surveillance, as their fixer has arranged for deckers to take care of it. As long as the runners don't set off too many fireworks and alert the Pueblo Security Force, everything should go smoothly. If it doesn't, the PSF will resort to any means necessary to bring the runners' helicopter down, from missiles to spirits to pursuit craft. Luckily, the runners' employers can keep the clinic from being alerted until after the runners get there.

Event 2

The runners are given any necessary flight plans and codes in advance, and the merc unit is in contact and ready to follow them. If the runners check, their helicopter is loaded with cases of expensive medical drugs, surgical gear, unusual ritual sorcery materials and refrigerated blood and tissue samples. Their destination is a compound in the middle of nowhere, featuring a helipad, several buildings and a wicked defense system.

It's going to take talent to dodge out and sneak over to the command center. The runners are up against a well-designed rigged security system, drones, serious magical barriers, unusual background counts, hoop-kicking mages and elite guards. However, the runners have the advantage of surprise, detailed information on the facility's layout and security and a few necessary access codes. They may even get some of the team past all this with a simple ruse such as pretending to have an important confidential message for the security officer in charge. In such a situation, only a few of the runners would be taken to the command center, splitting the team.

Event 3

Once the runners seize the control room and give the all clear, the mercs move in with precision military maneuvers. The runners can help out the mercs by jamming the guards' radios, using the rigged system against them, sealing off certain areas of the compound, releasing neuro-stun gas in selected rooms and corridors and so on.

Once alerted, the guards will make every attempt to retake the command center. If the runners seal themselves in, the guards will send spirits in to occupy the runners while they blast or cut through the door. They will also send physical adepts in through a repair service tunnel to come up underneath the runners.

Ideally, the runners and mercs should take control of the facility. Dr. Dmitri Zalman, the head researcher and an initiated hermetic mage, will be outraged at the takeover and any damage done, and will refuse to cooperate. When a Yamana-backed Fuchi executive flies in shortly afterward, he orders Zalman arrested and replaces him with another scientist loyal to Yamana—Dr. Quinn Hildebrandt. The runners will find themselves in the unenviable position of policing the clinic's staff until the Yamana exec consolidates control.

Climax

After locking up Zalman in a detention cell, the runners are ordered to guard him and stay out of the way until they are flown out. The runners may notice that some of the clinic's mages and

the Fuchi exec's guards seem to be searching the facility for some one or something, but they refuse to comment if the runners ask. Zalman will try to persuade the runners to aid him, either in retaking the facility or escaping. He will appeal to their sense of morality, lie and offer them money, delta-grade cyberware and powerful magic. If given an opportunity, he will use mind control spells on the runners.

While Zalman distracts the runners, the cavalry comes to his aid in the shadowy form of Mr. Monty Livingston. Livingston is a British vampire and part of the Ordo Maximus, an initiatory group that is teaching the Fuchi mages cybermancy. Because the Ordo Maximus has an agreement with Villiers and not with Yamana, Livingston will seek to sabotage the Yamana-backed takeover by any means necessary. Livingston has already alerted the Villiers faction to the takeover, and Fuchi troops loyal to Villiers are on the way to the clinic to restuff the balance of power. Livingston's efforts will throw the clinic into chaos, during which he will attempt to sneak past the runners and break Zalman out. As the conflict between the runners and Livingston escalates, the other Fuchi troops arrive and engage the mercs. Aware that something bad is going on, Pueblo Security Forces will surround the Fuchi-owned land and blockade it, seeking to keep the fighting from spreading.

The runners will be in deep dreck if they don't evacuate. When they decide to bail, remind them of their back-up orders to extract certain personnel. The primary individual target is, of course, Zalman. With or without him, getting away from the vampire and the Fuchi troops and through the Pueblo troops should be challenging, but not impossible.

Sequels

If the runners succeeded in extracting anyone, the Yamana faction will reward them. If they extracted Zalman, the Ordo may eliminate him through ritual magic (they have his tissue samples) or through vampiric assassins. Depending on how slowly they move, the runners may get in the way of this operation. Also, Yamana will not surrender his goal of gaining control of the delta clinic, or at least taking charge of the cybermantic rituals practiced there.

If the runners ended up aiding Zalman, they also will be rewarded—with a swift death. Unfortunately, the runners know too much about the black clinic to be trusted.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

This section provides additional short adventure ideas involving Fuchi and other players involved in the corp's affairs. The gamemaster can flesh out these ideas as short or full-fledged adventures using the material in this book.

HOSTILE TAKEOVER

At the height of Fuchi's internal struggle, many of the corporation's routine procedures become disrupted by sabotage, resource-shifting, takeovers and shadowruns. Some Fuchi installations begin suffering for lack of basic human services, such as food, clean water and medical supplies. Increasingly deteriorating conditions incite some workers to engage in work stoppages, strikes and in some cases outright riots. In one such situation, the Fuchi Aquasphere near Indonesia has declared itself independent (whether as a corporation or as a free city is up to the gamemaster). Unable to allocate enough troops to quell the rebellion, Fuchi has interdicted the aquasphere.

The runners are contacted by representatives of the aquasphere's Worker's Council, who want to employ them to smuggle a shipment of food, supplies and weapons past the Fuchi blockade and into the facility. The runners will have a harder time getting out than getting in. The workers may ask the runners for training or help in resisting a Fuchi invasion, or may even employ them for shadow-ops to distract and harass the corp. The runners might also be drawn into the Council's internal conflicts; some of its members want to ask another Fuchi faction or megacorp for assistance, while the die hards want to keep other corps out of it.

A GIFT FOR THE BRIDE

Korin Yamana wants to find a suitable present that will impress his bride-to-be, Mitsuko Shiawase. Because Mitsuko has an interest in kuge reptiles and snakes, he decides to bring her a gift worthy of her station. Through a fixer, he employs the runners to enter the Philippine jungles and capture a king cobra no less than eight meters long.

While pursuing their prey, the runners may face other dangers, such as pirates, overzealous Imperial Marines, rival hunters, Awakened critters or even malaria or VITAS. Through good hunting, guides and rumors, they close in on a snake the size they need—only to find that parazoologists from Mitsuhama's Parashield branch have already captured it. Parashield is keeping the critter in its compound, which is full of other Awakened monsters that Parashield is breeding, training, chroming up and experimenting on. To meet their Johnson's deadline, the runners will have to extract the snake from the corp compound and smuggle it out of the country. They may face more trouble from MCT-connected yakuza goons while trying to get the cobra back to Japan.

BUSTIN' OUT

As an extraterritorial entity, Fuchi maintains its own internal legal system and therefore its own prisons. Not one to let good live bodies go to waste, Fuchi often "volunteers" its prisoners for research projects, experimental cyberware and so on. The projects help keep the prison population down as well.

A group of shady characters approaches the runners about a prison-break job. They identify themselves as members of an anti-megacorporate armed resistance group called Corpbusters. They want the runners to liberate their leader, a man named Darrel Burns, from a Fuchi prison before the prison reverts to another corp such as Novatech or gets dissolved. They will pay extra if the runners help any of Darrel's comrades escape as well.

As the runners will discover, Darrel Burns has been implanted with an experimental tactical computer, and most of his "comrades" have been implanted with similar pieces of exotic headware. Not surprisingly, neither Darrel nor his comrades have ever been part of a group called Corpbusters. In reality, the runners have been hired by Saeder-Krupp agents instructed to acquire the test subjects for that corp's own purposes.

TRACK TWO: NECK AND NECK

ON THE BRINK

SHADOWWATCH: Your eye on the shadows.
All the latest news bits and bytes from the Shadowland BBS

● Looks like something big is happening up Zurich-Orbital way. A chummer of mine has a friend of a friend who does some telemetry work for AresSpace (and no, I can't refer you to him so don't ask). He tells me that about four hours ago, he got orders to find a launch window for a previously unscheduled boost from Kennedy International up to Z-O. Not the kind of thing that happens often, you know? So I did a little digging and discovered that Paul Graves, one of Ares' Corporate Court justices, ducked out of a high-level strategy session in Detroit and hopped a private jet to New York—Kennedy International, to be precise. That piqued my curiosity, so I did a little more digging. I found out that of the eleven current justices besides Graves, four are known to have broken off other engagements and flown to New York, two were already aboard Z-O and no one seems to know where the other five are. It's hardly conclusive evidence, but I'm willing to bet that the justices are getting together for one of those rare face-to-face powwows they so creatively refer to as conclaves. And the bigwigs have decided not to trust the heavy-duty IC that protects the station's communication links with Earth—and that means there is something very heavy going on at the Court, boys and girls.
● Black-Eyed Susan

● You might want to run a diagnostic on your math SPU there, Suze. There are thirteen justices on the CaCo, not twelve. Not that I doubt your conclusions, but I just wanted to let you know.
● Link

● First off, don't call me "Suze," you patronizing slot. Second, if you could read as well as you can add, you'd know that Aburakoji, one of the Mitsuhama justices, committed suicide last month and the Court hasn't chosen a replacement yet. Check your facts before you check my math, drekhead.
● Black-Eyed Susan

● Aburakoji didn't kill himself, the yakuza did it for him. He was getting ready to rat out the MCT oyabuns to the Japanese government, so they offed him to keep him quiet.
● Lone Gunman

● For the I-hope-to-Ghost last time, there are no MCT oyabuns.
● Turner

● And if there were, the last thing they'd be worried about is somebody tipping off the government. The yaks fraggin' own the Japanese government.
● Whatzit

● Well, it's official: Z-O has entered a communications black out with Earth. Whatever they're talking about up there, they don't want to take any chances that someone will overhear.
● FastJack

● Well, that doesn't leave us much to talk about, now does it? Wake me up when we know something.
●>>IMBED: SleepyFrame<<
● Piker

● ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ
● SleepyFrame v3.3—brought to you by PikerWare!

● Okay, Piker, let's see if this gets your frame's attention. The folks in the MegaWatch SIG have been tracking a lot of movement among Fuchi and Renraku security and military assets in the fifteen or so hours since Black-Eyed Susan broke the news about the Corporate Court convening on Z-O. Whatever the Court is up to, it probably has to do with the trouble that's been brewing ever since Miles Lanier bailed out of Fuchi and joined Renraku mere days after Dunkelzahn's death. It's taken two years, but it looks like matters are finally coming to a head.
● Kaptain Krude

.SYSTEM BROADCAST MESSAGE TO
ALL SHADOWLAND NODES FOLLOWS:
● Hey, chummers, things are happening with some of the AAA megacorps that do not bode well for us in the shadows. While Renraku and Fuchi have been giving us all a lot of business lately, it now looks like they're going to move the action into the legal realm. Like Black-Eyed Susan reported, the justices of the Corporate Court, all of them, took the boost up to the Zurich Orbital for some closed-door meeting. Now Fuchi and Renraku seem to be arming quietly for a war behind the scenes; moving assets and personnel around like pieces on a chessboard. I have the sinking feeling that a lot of what's about to go down hangs on what decision the Corporate Court hands down, and either way it could come down to a corp war. If you have any information, please post it. We need to keep each other informed because an out-and-out corporate war could mean big business in the shadows ... or a fight that nobody wins.
● Captain Chaos
Transmitted: 6 June 2059 at 15:44:19 (EST)
::SYSTEM BROADCAST MESSAGE ENDS::

● Well, that certainly woke me up. I didn't have a frame monitoring the MegaWatch SIG, Kaptain K: what have I missed?
● Piker

● Well, Z-O has "de-cloaked" a few times, and there have been a lot of heavily encrypted communications going back and forth between the satellite and the various megacorporate HQs. The troop movements are still pretty subtle, but it's clear that both Fuchi and Renraku are gearing up for a fight and that the other megas are positioning their own assets to either help one or the other, or stay the frag out of the way.
● Kaptain Krude

● Um, Cap, everyone, I think something's going on all right. There's something screwy happening with Renraku. There's a flurry of activity in RenrakuNet: e-mails, faxes and messages going out by the nanosecond. For as I know, there's still no word from the Corporate Court, so this could be Renraku preparing for a first strike of some kind. Fuchi hasn't reacted yet, but this is still going down as I speak. They may not have had time yet. Things could be about to go. Anybody out there got any Renraku or Fuchi stock? You might want to consider your options.
● The Chramed Accountant
"It's all about dollars and sense."

● So that's what that was. I was doing a little legwork in a Renraku host here in Des Moines about twenty minutes ago when a slew of high-priority packets came flying in from Chiba. Within two minutes, everything started going crazy. Something was deleting databases from the system left and right; some of them were getting archived but some of them weren't, and it sure as drek looked like some of them were deleting themselves. Messages were just flooding out of the system to who-knows-where. I put a tracer on one of the original priority messages, and it reported that the original packets also had been deleted. I thought I had triggered some of Renraku's fancy new SmartIC, so I split while the getting was good, but now it just looks like I was caught in the middle of something bigger. If you ask me, it didn't look like they were getting ready for a war. It looked like they were trying to bury some data so deep nobody could find it.
● Hawkeye

● Hey, I was in the middle of that too, and it sounds like I managed to hang on a little longer than you did, Hawk ol' buddy. I traced one of those priority packets and actually snagged it long enough to download a copy. The info I intercepted came from a Renraku subsidiary in Boston, though, not from Chiba at all. I ran all the usual diagnostics on the thing, and discovered that it wasn't an informational message at all—it was a delete order with some really specific parameters. Weird, huh?
● Bouncing Boy

● Uh-huh. And your proof of all this is where ... ? Even if you really managed to do what you claim, you shouldn't be allowed on the net until you grow up enough to be able to draw intelligent conclusions from the information you gather.
● Father Time

● Well, duh! My whole deck got trashed by that friggin delete code. I was lucky to escape with my brain. Of course I don't have any evidence, but I swear it's true. My word should be good enough for anyone.
● Bouncing Boy

• Sigh. The level of naiveté gets higher on this board every day. Can't you do something about that, Cap'n?
• Father Time

• If you're right, Hawkeye, then Renraku might not just be preparing to fight off Fuchi. If they're covering something up now, ten to one it's something they don't want the Corporate Court to know about. Which means that if the Court does find out about it, they're going to smack Renraku pretty hard around the head and shoulders. And if this kind of thing is going on all over RenrakuNet, then it must be one monster big project they're trying to hide . . . like maybe how they've been so far ahead of the technology curve for a year and a half. Whatever it is, it looks like they're terrified at the idea of it coming to light. And there aren't many things that can terrify a AAA megacorp.
• FastJack

• Are you saying what I think you're saying? You think there's going to be a Court mandate against Renraku?
• The Dark Wight

• I don't know. But if the Corporate Court really is prepared to give another corp permission to discipline a AAA corp, Ghost help us all.
• FastJack

WHAT'S GOING DOWN

In the past two years, Renraku has repeatedly surprised the megacorporate world by releasing a series of advances in Matrix hardware and software that has rocked its competitors and secured Renraku an ever-increasing market share. The corporation's success in this one area has allowed Renraku to dramatically expand its other businesses, rapidly pushing the company ever higher on the list of AAA megacorporations. Having already surpassed long-time rival Mitsuhama in annual gross profits, Renraku's latest line of computer hardware is now making a serious dent in the market share of previously dominant Fuchi.

Fuchi has more than one reason to resent Renraku, however. One of the bequests in Dunkelzahn's will put Miles Lanier, Fuchi's head of internal security, on Renraku's board of directors. (See **Track 1: Civil War,** p. 20, for complete information on the Fuchi upheaval.) Lanier's acrimonious departure from Fuchi left the latter company scrambling to revise the security measures that Lanier himself had put into place and prompted Renraku to wonder if Lanier's presence on their board would be a gold mine or a land mine. When Renraku began releasing breakthrough hardware designs that bore a strong resemblance to Fuchi prototypes shortly after Lanier's arrival, it seemed clear that the former Fuchi loyalist had thrown his lot in with Renraku. Fuchi's subsequent accusations of high-level espionage quickly brought the corporations' decades-old rivalry roaring back to life. Now, tensions on the Corporate Court—and in the shadows of every major urban sprawl—run high as the two megacorps edge ever closer to all-out corporate war.

This section describes the history of Renraku Computer Systems and its recent, meteoric rise and precipitous fall. This description includes the details of the company's extended shadow conflict with Fuchi and the events that will shape Renraku's destiny in the 2060s.

RENRAKU HISTORY

Renraku Computer Systems officially came into existence in 2029, but the company's history properly begins some thirty years before. The core businesses of what is now Renraku were then part of a corporation named Keruba International. Founded in Slovenia at the turn of the century, Keruba began as a consortium of military manufacturers and was the first company to develop a commercially viable vectored-thrust vehicle. With nearby conflicts in the Middle East, continuing unrest in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Russo-Polish "Border Wars" ensuring a large market for Keruba's products, the company began diversifying, primarily into other forms of heavy industry, global telecommunications and security-oriented computer hardware and software. The computer branches of the business initially contributed to the bottom line only as a sideline, but the Keruba technicians' research would bring rich rewards a few decades later.

By 2010, Keruba had followed the leads of Shiawase and the rest of the "Big Seven" by becoming a significant extraterritorial power in its own right. And, setting a precedent for expanding corporations that continues to the present day, it began celebrating its newfound power by picking fights with its rivals. BMW had followed Keruba's lead into the design and manufacture of military LAVs, and by virtue of its longer history and reputation for quality, quickly began cutting significantly into Keruba's sales. Keruba responded to this competition in 2011 with a military operation against one of BMW's main research divisions, and an escalating series of retaliatory strikes cost both sides dozens of lives and (more importantly, in the companies' view) billions of petrodollars before the conflict petered out. This costly exchange formed the primary impetus for founding the Inter-Corporate Council, the precursor of today's Corporate Court.

Two years later, Keruba had the dubious honor of being involved in the first major skirmish brought before the ICC to resolve, a protracted conflict between Keruba and ORO (the corporation that would evolve into Aztechnology). The motives behind this struggle are less clear, but the conflict inflicted heavy costs on both sides, and Keruba found itself severely weakened both militarily and financially. Other corps took this situation as a sign that Keruba was a ripe candidate for a takeover bid, and several first- and second-tier corps attempted to incorporate Keruba into their holdings. The leading contenders were such formidable corporate empires as Ares Macrotechnology, BMW (now Saeder-Krupp) and Mitsuhama, but the stubborn resistance (and enormous personal fortune) of CEO Kerpan Ubavic allowed Keruba to maintain its independence. The Crash of '29 dealt a massive blow to all the corporations, but Keruba found itself in worse shape than most. Compounding the problems of the company, Ubavic was killed in a midair jet collision over Dulles International, one of many such collisions attributed to the Crash virus's penetration of the United States' air-traffic control system. Ubavic had main-

tained such tight personal control over virtually every aspect of the company that his death left Keruba leaderless and without direction at the most critical juncture in the company's history.

Enter Inazo Aneki, a fiery young corporate raider from Chiba with an eye for opportunity and a "can't miss" reputation. Aneki had been looking for a ripe military investment since the Crash, recognizing that global conflict was likely to follow such massive economic upheaval. When he learned of Keruba's weakened condition, he acted immediately, hastily forming a corporation he named Renraku Holdings for the express purpose of taking over Keruba. Using his history of extraordinarily profitable takeovers as collateral, Aneki secured a massive loan from Global Financial Services, enlisted the aid of several fellow corporate mavericks and bought Keruba from the panicked shareholders.

Aneki initially planned to sell off Keruba, in pieces or as a whole, as soon as the global market recovered to the point where the company would be profitable again. However, without Ubavle at the helm, the corporation had quickly degenerated into a collection of individual divisions with no unifying direction, and Aneki found it necessary to use a more hands-on strategy in order to keep the company from completely fragmenting into a series of unrelated and unprofitable entities. In the years following the Crash, he discovered that he enjoyed guiding a single company to success and decided to stay on as Renraku's chairman rather than sell it off to engage in another round of corporate raiding. Relocating the corporate headquarters to Chiba, Japan, Aneki and his fellow shareholders began transforming Keruba, a disjointed collection of companies held together only by Ubavle's personal magnetism, into Renraku, a modern Japanese-style keiretsu that would endure beyond the leadership of any one man. Aneki's ability to lead, however, did not yet measure up to his desire.

Burning the Candle at Both Ends

In the 2030s, the growth of the Matrix gave impetus to Renraku's computer divisions. In the first decade of the new millennium, Keruba system engineers had discovered (and patented) a series of sophisticated high-speed data storage and retrieval systems, fractal-based data compression algorithms and other theoretical programming breakthroughs. Because Keruba's specialized systems were largely incompatible with the computers used by the rest of the world, they never produced any significant sales or income for the company. After the Crash of '29 leveled the playing field of the world's computer systems, however, companies rediscovered the efficiency of Keruba's algorithms and began to apply them to the newly christened Matrix. Keruba's—now Renraku's—storage systems became the new standard, and licensing fees began to pour into Renraku's coffers.

The Euro-Wars also proved to be a major source of income for Renraku because the corporation still generated most of its income from the military companies that had formed Keruba's core. The division heads from each of these subsidiaries guided Aneki in what to sell and to whom. Their advice enabled the company to make impressive profits, but as the decade wore on, it became increasingly apparent that these "expert advisers" were lining their own pockets at Renraku's expense. Aneki, satisfied with

the heady rush of controlling a top-tier megacorporation, either ignored his employees' skimming or didn't realize that he was losing what little control he held over his company. Instead, he spent most of his time socializing with the corporate executives and heads of state whom he considered his peers and buying any smaller company that took his fancy, regardless of its profitability.

By 2038, the name Renraku was synonymous with corporate corruption. Employees at every level were taking bribes and kickbacks, selling information to rival corporations and generally seizing every opportunity to siphon off Renraku's dwindling profits for themselves. Payments on the massive loan used to purchase Kerubu began to represent more and more of a drain on the company's resources, and Renraku had to refinance the loan several times to keep the payments manageable. The corp was able to refinance because Renraku owned part of Global Financial Services, now the Zurich-Orbital Gemeinschaft Bank, but using that resource allowed the other AAA corps that made up Z-O's shareholders to become aware of Renraku's desperation.

Renraku's main shareholders were well aware that the corporation was going down the tubes, and they rightly blamed Aneki's ineffective leadership as the major cause. The young corporate pirate known for wheeling and dealing with the best of them had become the fat, happy, blinkered corporate CEO that he had mocked—and outwitted—so many times early in his career. Convinced that the first step toward rebuilding Renraku was to replace Aneki as CEO, a trio of Renraku's major shareholders quietly began to maneuver stock in an attempt to take control of the board.

The coup attempt gave Aneki a much-needed wake-up call. He took a hard look at the corporation he had created and was shocked to see how far the situation had deteriorated. It was obvious that major changes needed to take place in order to restore the shareholders' faith in the corporation, but Aneki wasn't ready yet to resign for the good of Renraku. The old Inazo Aneki reemerged, and he applied the same techniques that he used to buy corporations to take firmer control of his own. When the dust settled at the next Renraku board meeting, Aneki was still firmly entrenched as CEO, and the three investors who had tried to bring him down were themselves ousted from the board of directors.

Immediately after pulling off this "reverse coup," Aneki initiated a slow, methodical purge of Renraku's management, from the top executives down. The most corrupt and incompetent officials were fired; others were given the option to change their ways or hit the streets. Renraku issued a massive amount of stock in an attempt to revive the company's flagging fortunes. While never stating it in so many words, Aneki subtly fostered the idea that the three ousted directors were responsible for much of the company's corruption and mismanagement, and that he had finally managed to remove them, freeing himself to clean up "his" corporation. The shareholders bought the story; more importantly, they also bought the stock. His controlling interest in the corporation diluted by the massive influx of new shareholders, Aneki stepped down as chairman, choosing instead to devote his full attention to the day-to-day operation of the corporation. Yukiako Watanabe, a long-time board member who had been integral in Aneki's boardroom maneuverings, took over the chairman's seat.

The managerial purge hit Renraku's military subsidiaries the hardest, and those divisions fiercely resented Aneki. Unwilling to continually deal with dissatisfied and possibly treacherous employees and subcompanies, Aneki simply chose to sell off the most troublesome divisions to other corporations and to concentrate instead on the computer hardware, software and services that had kept the company solvent in its troubled times. He emphasized corporate loyalty and a "family" image for the corp's employees and began to turn his earlier excesses (such as the over-equipped, undertrained Red Samurai) into effective parts of the Renraku empire.

By 2045, Renraku had been transformed from a corrupt, erratically built house of cards to a stable (if somewhat predictable) corporate empire. By selling off the subsidiaries that detracted from Renraku's core businesses, Aneki had produced a smaller but more efficient megacorporation. It failed to dominate in any field, but was competitive in virtually all of them. An older and wiser Aneki then began to move Renraku along a cautious, sensible road into the future.

A Stroke of Genius

In mid-2057, a series of events took place that would shake Renraku and the megacorporate world to its foundations. Renraku and the other AAA megacorporations simultaneously received outrageous blackmail demands from an unknown decker of uncanny and unstoppable ability, one with the power to slip into the companies' most secure systems and shut them down without ever alerting a single system or decker. Each of the megacorps suspected the others of perpetrating this damaging infiltration, but it was a Renraku agent who finally discovered the true source of the threat—the erratic but undeniably brilliant elf who called himself Leonardo. Leonardo launched his blackmail attempts in an effort to secure the staggering amount of money he needed to complete his mysterious "Great Work." When confronted by the Renraku decker, Leonardo changed his tactic, offering the megacorp technological breakthroughs in exchange for the funding he desired. Staggered by the implications of Leonardo's technological ability and determined to keep that ability working for Renraku alone, Aneki agreed to cut a deal. To this day, the other AAA megacorporations know nothing of Leonardo or his bargain with Renraku; they know only that they remain forever vulnerable to someone who possesses the ability to reach into their most secure Matrix systems and escape unscathed.

Leonardo's workshop provided Renraku with technological advancements far beyond anything that Renraku or its competitors could have expected to produce in as much as a decade. Many aspects of his work were too advanced for even Renraku's best technicians to understand, but the elements they managed to grasp were enough to kick Renraku's computer division into high gear. Within a year, Renraku surpassed Mitsuhama as a producer of cutting-edge Matrix software, releasing a dynamic new series of IC programs that set the Matrix on its ear. New cyberdecks and other hardware designs soon began cutting into Fuchi's traditional dominance of those markets, pushing Renraku ever higher in the megacorporate hierarchy.

Perhaps more important to Renraku than the booming product sales were the abilities Renraku's own personnel gained. Renraku deckers, armed with Leonardo's far-superior cyberdecks and futuristic utilities, now enjoyed a substantial edge over their corporate rivals—not substantial enough to duplicate Leonardo's own unprecedented penetration of the Big Eight's megacorporate systems, but sufficient to greatly improve Renraku's ability to steal research from its competitors' systems. Renraku's own Matrix hosts were equipped with enough bleeding-edge IC to make them virtually impregnable. The adaptive IC fed long-standing rumors that Renraku had created its own AI; the truth actually was more extraordinary, but Renraku was happy to let the rest of the world believe what it wanted as long as it kept buying.

Miles to Go

Even before the company realized the full benefits of Leonardo's technology, Renraku received another potential windfall. Fate—and the death of a certain great western dragon—placed Miles Lanier, head of internal security for Fuchi Industrial Electronics, on the Renraku board of directors.

A former sniper for the UCAS Army, Lanier brought the skills from that role into the corporate world, making it his specialty to remove problems quickly and efficiently. As he moved up Fuchi's corporate ranks, he enforced his will far more often with his mind than with his strength, but his native intelligence and attention to detail made the transition from physical action to behind-the-scenes manipulation a smooth one. He earned his position as the head of Fuchi Internal Security by being better at his job than anyone else, and he is credited with making Fuchi's sites some of the most secure in the world, both physically and electronically.

Lanier and Fuchi CEO Richard Villiers became close friends, and Villiers openly and often acknowledged Lanier as an integral part of Fuchi's success. Dunkelzahn's bequest had a dramatic effect on that well-established relationship. For reasons known only to the late president, Dunkelzahn left Lanier all of his Renraku stock and the corresponding seat on the Renraku board of directors. Obviously, Lanier couldn't serve both megacorps, and he made his decision quickly. Lanier began packing up his office at Fuchi the day that Dunkelzahn's will was read, apparently willing to forsake his long-term prospects with Fuchi in favor of the easier life of a corporate board member. Lanier and Villiers engaged in a fierce—and very public—argument over Lanier's decision, and both men renounced their friendship as a result. Lanier left Fuchi without looking back, and Fuchi immediately began fortifying its security measures against the man who had designed them.

Renraku, in turn, faced a critical question. Was Lanier a Fuchi plant, or was it possible that he could genuinely change his loyalty? Renraku ordered invasive background checks and round-the-clock surveillance meant to discover any ties Lanier might have maintained to Fuchi, but all information gathered indicated that Lanier indeed had thoroughly burned his bridges. In fact, Lanier's first advice to his new corporation gave Renraku the inside track to acquiring several Fuchi subsidiaries, and he provided back doors and other inside tips that gave Renraku's already-formidable deckers even more of an edge over Fuchi. Fuchi responded by launching several assassination attempts against Lanier, nearly succeeding on more than one occasion. After working with Lanier for nearly two years, the Renraku board finally began to believe that he could be treated as an asset rather than a potential spy.

By the end of 2058, Renraku began to close on Fuchi's position as the second-largest megacorporation in the world. The other AAA megacorps took notice of this unprecedented and rapid growth, but none was more concerned about the implications of this growth than Fuchi. Shadow conflicts between Fuchi and Renraku increased exponentially, making numerous shadowrunners rich and many others dead. While Fuchi fielded better black ops personnel and more diverse shadow resources in these skirmishes, Renraku enjoyed several significant advantages—Leonardo's technology, Lanier's inside information and Fuchi's internal dissension. It soon became clear that Fuchi was fighting a losing battle against Renraku, and the rapid hemorrhage of resources served to exacerbate Fuchi's internal power struggle (see **Track 1: Civil War**).

Soon recognizing the futility of fighting a shadow war, Fuchi decided to pursue a different method of bringing Lanier and Renraku to heel. In June 2059, Fuchi called an emergency meeting of the Corporate Court on Zurich-Orbital, with all justices required to be physically present. The orbital platform's Matrix communications were cut off for much of the next twenty-four hours while the justices debated the issues Fuchi raised, generally believed to focus on accusations that Renraku conducted industrial espionage against the megacorporation with Lanier's assistance. Some eighteen hours after the Court initially convened, Renraku's computer systems suddenly engaged in a flurry of activity, sending messages from Renraku's corporate headquarters to branch offices and subsidiaries throughout the world. Matrix observers suspected that the corporation was planning a preemptive military strike against Fuchi, and tensions ran high for several hours until the Court rendered its decision. While the details of what transpired may never be known, the Court's judgment resulted in Miles Lanier voluntarily turning himself over to Fuchi security, resigning from Renraku's board of directors and selling his Renraku stock to the Zurich-Orbital Gemeinschaft Bank at slightly below market value.

While not as devastating as a full-fledged corporate war would have been, the Court's decision proved to be a major setback to Renraku's phenomenal growth. The sale of Lanier's stock to the Gemeinschaft Bank gave the bank, and thus the Corporate Court, significant leverage over Renraku's policies. In addition, the sale of stock at an unexpectedly low price caused a great deal of negative speculation in the world's stock markets, significantly dropping Renraku's stock price. The fact that a member of the board of directors was arrested for conducting industrial espionage also damaged investors' confidence in Renraku. The mysterious inventor Leonardo apparently disappeared and Renraku's cutting-edge research ground to a halt as the corporation attempted to compensate for his absence. Indeed, it soon became evident that much of the technology that Renraku developed from Leonardo's inventions had also disappeared, leaving Renraku's technicians in the curious position of having to reverse-engineer their own products. More seriously, the disappearance of Leonardo's technology degraded Renraku's previously formidable

Matrix defenses, leaving gaping holes that their competitors' deckers quickly discovered and exploited. Finally, Renraku's databases—both the company's own and those that they maintained for paying clients, such as the Seattle public database SeaSource—were discovered to contain odd gaps and omissions. Renraku's deckers, along with teams of deckers employed by their client companies, continue to conduct exhaustive analyses and comprehensive searches of the affected databases in order to determine the full effects of the damage, but no information has been released to the public regarding what is actually missing.

Renraku counted a few successes among the repercussions caused by the Court's decision. The megacorp received financial reparation from Fuchi for Miles Lanier's actions, though the exact amount of the award remains unknown. Renraku also gained a second justice on the Corporate Court, as Navroz Chandaria of Renraku Asia was chosen to fill the court position left vacant by the suicide of Mitsuhama's Dosan Aburakoji. Despite these benefits, however, Renraku came up short in its attempt to surpass Fuchi, and shadow conflicts between the two megacorporations intensified as each strove to regain a clear advantage in the global marketplace.

A Very Bad Year

The arrival of the year 2060 failed to change Renraku's run of bad luck. In December of 2059, an unidentified systems glitch caused the security systems of the company's Seattle arcology to go haywire, injuring numerous inhabitants and visitors and closing the building off from the rest of the world both physically and electronically. While Renraku quickly claimed to have regained control of the affected systems, they still declared the building off-limits to visitors for an indefinite period in the interests of public safety, and the incident further eroded public confidence in Renraku. Insiders believe the situation to be far more serious than Renraku is willing to admit; neither shadow operatives nor other megacorporate teams have been able to successfully penetrate the arcology's physical defenses, and the general consensus is that Renraku no longer controls its long-awaited arcology in Seattle. No rival corp admits to sabotaging the Renraku facility, and so speculation runs rampant as to the cause of this situation—each guess more disturbing in its implications than the last.

In February of 2060, Renraku CEO Inazo Aneki began an indefinite leave of absence from his duties with the corporation. Citing "pressing personal issues," Aneki turned the reins of the corporation over to COO Haruhiko Nakada and apparently departed for Tibet. Regardless of his true destination, Renraku since has offered no updates on Aneki's plans or whereabouts.

In March, Navroz Chandaria, Renraku's newly elected Corporate Court representative, died in a terrorist bombing in New Delhi. The bombers most likely intended to kill Jawahr Prasad, India's Secretary of Commerce, who was meeting with Chandaria, but Prasad survived the bombing with only minor injuries. When the Corporate Court convened to elect a replacement for Chandaria, it chose Yves Aquillon, who represents Cross Applied Technologies. This left Renraku with only one representative, Francesco Napoli, on the Court. In June, Napoli was replaced on the Court by Neil Benson of Renraku Australasia, and Napoli retired shortly thereafter.

Renraku's luck finally seemed to turn when long-time rival Fuchi collapsed under the weight of its own internal conflicts. In April of 2060, Shikei Nakatomi, the former head of Fuchi Asia, tendered a huge cash offer to the Zurich-Orbital Gemeinschaft Bank for the four million shares of Renraku stock it purchased from Miles Lanier. The bank accepted the offer, giving Nakatomi a substantial equity position in the megacorporation and a seat on its board of directors. Nakatomi immediately began advising and guiding Renraku in the successful acquisition of the Fuchi assets his family formerly controlled, proving that the new partnership was an equal one. The long-standing animosity between the two corporations faded in view of their common hatred of Richard Villiers, and Nakatomi's money provided a much-needed boost to Renraku's sluggish balance sheets.

When all was said and done, Renraku entered the 2060s wounded but still dangerous. While the company's push toward the top rung on the megacorporate ladder was thwarted, it gained a significant amount of power with Nakatomi's arrival. Despite its setbacks, Renraku is poised to remain a strong competitor in the megacorporate world.

THE PLAYERS

This section describes the corporations and the major non-player characters who play a part in the Renraku track of the **Blood in the Boardroom** story line, outlining their roles, motivations and plans. The gamemaster can use these characters in the adventures provided in this section, or as background material for other shadowruns involving the world of the megacorps.

FUCHI INDUSTRIAL ELECTRONICS

President/CEO: Richard Villiers (through October 2059); Korin Yamana, at least on paper (from October 2059 to 28 July 2060)
Headquarters: Tokyo, Japan

Business Profile:

In 2057, Fuchi stood as the second-largest megacorporation in the world, second only to Saeder-Krupp. By the middle of 2060, it no longer existed—destroyed by three years of nearly constant chaos, with partisan struggles weakening it from within and Renraku pressuring it from without. During these years, Fuchi effectively functioned as three independent megacorporations, each with its own strengths, weaknesses and global agenda, operating under a common name. (See **Track 1: Civil War** for more details about Fuchi's collapse.)

Though the megacorporation known as Fuchi self-destructed, its component elements (Novatech, headed by Richard Villiers; the Nakatomi investment in Renraku; and the Yamana merger with Shiawase) continue to lead the cutting edge in computer technology, particularly in the fields of cyberdeck design, security software and direct neural interfaces. These separate elements also maintain a strong presence in the military and security markets outside the Matrix and dominate a large share of the cybernetics market. Fuchi's orbital and near-space assets, second only to Ares, now belong solely to Novatech, Inc.

RENRAKU COMPUTER SYSTEMS

President/CEO: Inazo Aneki
Headquarters: Chiba, Japan

Business Profile:

Long considered the sleeping dragon of the AAA megacorps, Renraku has used its size and resources to become a formidable opponent in the corporate arena, a reputation diminished only by a history of somewhat predictable and conservative business decisions. In 2057, it began producing a sudden rush of superior technologies that left competitors shaking their heads and scrambling to catch up. Now, even though it no longer enjoys access to the expertise that provided that technological edge, Renraku remains a force to be reckoned with in the computer industry. The corp's industrial and biotechnology divisions also received significant boosts with the acquisition of Nakatomi's share of Fuchi, a move that solidified the corp's Asian power base almost overnight.

The long-overdue completion of the ambitious Seattle arcology project gave Renraku a significant public relations boost in that city, but the arcology's shutdown has renewed old doubts about the building's viability—and raised new ones about the corp's stability.

Inazo Aneki

Aneki, age seventy, has changed a great deal from the young corporate raider who bought Keruba International in order to turn a quick profit. Now a patient, prudent and intelligent leader, both he and his company have survived corruption, internal dissent and his own mismanagement to emerge stronger and more productive than ever. Never married, Aneki considers his company to be his family, and his devotion to its success is repaid by the generally high loyalty and morale of Renraku's employees. Despite the corporation's recent reversal of fortunes, Aneki refuses to retire as CEO; he would consider his resignation from that position a cowardly abdication of the duty he owes to his employees and shareholders.

Dunkelzahn bequeathed Aneki the Seal of the Green Gloves, a token that permits him or a proxy to enter the nation of Tibet. Despite his well-known fascination with the study of human cultures and a long-suppressed love of travel to exotic places, Aneki's desire to see Renraku through its crisis clearly outweighed the lure of unknown Tibet. Now that the corporation's fortunes seem to have stabilized, Aneki has taken a much-deserved leave of absence; all indications are that he has finally used the seal and passed into Tibet. Though he considered the Seattle arcology one of his pet projects, he seems willing to let someone else solve the current crisis.

Yukiako Watanabe

In Japanese corporations, it is said that a woman must be twice as good as a man to advance half as far. If that saying is true, it says a great deal about Yukiako Watanabe, Renraku's chairman of the board. It takes a talented woman indeed to rise to the position of chairman of one of Japan's largest companies, and those who know her agree that Watanabe deserves her position. Intelligent, confident, ruthless and fiercely devoted to Renraku, Watanabe rules the fractious Renraku boardroom with an iron hand. Fortunately for the corporation, she and Aneki seem to agree on most decisions, thus avoiding the sort of ugly infighting that plagued Fuchi.

Haruhiko Nakada

"Harry," as he is known even in Chiba, is Renraku's chief operating officer and acting CEO during Aneki's leave of absence. His cheerful, outgoing personality conceals his basically ruthless nature; his desire to rise to Aneki's position is well known throughout the upper echelons of the corporation. Aneki has long treated Nakada as his chosen successor, and Nakada believes that Aneki's leave of absence is intended, at least in part, as a test to see how Nakada handles the company without him. If the opportunity presented itself, Nakada would gladly take hold of Renraku's reins permanently. For all that he keeps his eye on the main chance, however, he will not take unnecessary risks for the sake of a short-term gain—he expects Aneki to retire within a few years and does not intend to jeopardize his future by making an unnecessary coup attempt.

Miles Lanier

When Miles Lanier left Fuchi to take a position on Renraku's board of directors, business analyst Robert Goebel said that both companies suffered a loss—Fuchi because they no longer had access to Lanier's ingenuity, and Renraku because they had to put up with his personality. Despite his arrogant attitude, demanding behavior and somewhat grating disposition, Lanier is undoubtedly one of the great tactical minds of his generation. Had he stayed with the UCAS Army, he would most likely have made general; instead, he took his skills to the private sector. He and Richard Villiers became close friends, and it was no surprise that that relationship apparently did not survive Lanier's defection to Renraku. While some observers speculate that Lanier's stint at Renraku was part of a carefully orchestrated scam by Villiers, the truth surrounding Lanier's arrival at and departure from Renraku may never become public knowledge. The fact that Miles Lanier returned to Villiers to head up security at the newly formed Novatech Inc. certainly gives credence to those who suspect the two men of running an epic swindle.

Sherman Huang

The brilliant, eccentric Dr. Sherman Huang serves as the division manager of Renraku America and the executive director of the Seattle arcology. Unlike most such high-level executives, he spent a great deal of time involved in hands-on development of the arcology project and the highly advanced Arcology Expert Program designed to run it. Again, unlike most managers who insist on involving themselves in the day-to-day tasks of development, Huang proved to be thoroughly knowledgeable about the Arcology Expert Program and was instrumental in this remarkable program's development.

Having invested so much time and effort into the project, Dr. Huang was devastated when the arcology shut down in December of 2059, but he also finds the situation both intriguing and puzzling. While he relocated his offices to Renraku's New

York City headquarters and currently spends more time than before managing the rest of Renraku America, he frequently returns to Seattle to test various theories regarding the shutdown.

Those who write him off as a stereotypical "absent-minded professor" quickly discover that eccentric does not equal incompetent. A close friend of Inazo Aneki, Huang keeps abreast of events taking place in the Renraku boardroom as a point of interest. While not as politically savvy as some of his associates, Huang is extremely perceptive and often underestimated, always to his opponents' dismay.

Hiroshi Ushida

In early 2055, when Renraku's Chiba headquarters finally convinced CEO Aneki that the Seattle arcology might never be finished without intervention, they sent Hiroshi Ushida to take over as project manager. Not only did he manage to quickly and efficiently reorganize and streamline the dysfunctional management of the arcology project, but he was also instrumental in cutting through the types of delays that had plagued the arcology throughout its construction. Though he expected to return to Chiba once the arcology was up and running, he was instead assigned the title of arcology director and charged with overseeing the day-to-day functioning of the Seattle headquarters. This position held little appeal for Ushida, who preferred to finish one task and move on to a new project, but Huang appeared to be quite satisfied with Ushida's performance. Like most people inside the arcology when the systems went haywire, Ushida has not resurfaced, but Huang clearly is counting on his second-in-command to bring the situation under control in his usual efficient fashion.

Shikei Nakatomi

The former head of Fuchi Asia, Nakatomi chose to throw his lot in with Renraku when it became clear that he had finally lost any chance of gaining ultimate control of Fuchi. While it was Korin Yamana who originally wrested control of Fuchi away from him, Nakatomi lays the blame for all of his troubles at the feet of Richard Villiers. While he does not yet wield the influence at Renraku to begin a campaign of vengeance, he is finding many like-minded souls in his new company who similarly blame Villiers for Renraku's decline. As soon as this faction gains enough strength in the Renraku boardroom, Nakatomi will call for a full-fledged assault against Villiers and Novatech.

Known as the "Business Butcher" during his days with Fuchi, Nakatomi enjoys a well-deserved reputation for ruthlessness when driven by economic goals. Now that his motivations are personal as well, it seems likely he will stop at nothing to wreak his revenge.

TRANSYS NEURONET

President/CEO: Liam Riley
Headquarters: Edinburgh, Scotsprawl

Business Profile:

Transys Neuronet is a UK-based AA corp riding the cutting edge of Matrix, cyber and bioware research and development. Well-connected and funded, thanks to the backing of the Hildebrandt-Kleinfort-Bernal financial empire and the Welsh dragon Celedyr, their novahot research facility in Caerleon, Wales, Transys has repeatedly and regularly made stunning breakthroughs in several fields of experimental technology. Though at one point they were very close to surpassing Renraku's production, they quickly fell behind the tech curve in the face of Renraku's Leonardo-inspired developments. In response, they have chosen to focus their current research on creating viable Matrix connections for creatures such as dragons, satyrs and other paranormals.

Liam Riley

A relative newcomer to the world of the AA megacorps, Riley joined Transys Neuronet in 2053 as the HKB-appointed member of the board of directors. Typically, HKB played its cards close to the vest, making its appointment from the rank and file of its Data Services division and biding its time before cleverly maneuvering its candidate into the presidency of Transys in 2058. Despite the decidedly suspect nature of his appointment and rise to power, Riley is proving to be a surprisingly savvy and forward-thinking leader. Market analysts are conservatively suggesting that Liam Riley may prove a good choice for the megacorp, but they generally reserve judgment on where the HKB agenda ultimately will lead.

ADVENTURE FRAMEWORKS

This section presents several adventures in an outline format for the gamemaster to develop and use. All of the frameworks draw upon the background material and major characters described in this track.

... THIS IS YOUR BRAIN ON OTAKU

Premise

As part of a plan to learn the secrets of the otaku, Renraku infiltrated undercover operatives into various otaku groups around the UCAS. One of their agents, Diana Peng, managed to gain the trust of an otaku tribe in Seattle. After she had performed a few months of intense work for the otaku, the tribe sent her into the Matrix to undergo the mysterious Deep Resonance as her final initiation into their group. The Spirit of the Matrix was apparently displeased with Diana, however, because shortly thereafter Renraku operatives found her babbling on a street corner, physically unharmed but suffering from severe brain damage. In order to prevent the otaku from tracing the operation to Renraku, the corp's agents quietly moved Diana to a private clinic unaffiliated with Renraku and checked her in under an assumed name. While she is completely incapable of describing what happened to her, Renraku hopes that the clinic's insights into the changes in Diana's brain may still help them understand the nature of the otaku.

Fuchi hires the runners to extract Diana from the clinic in order to perform their own examination of her. Naturally, Renraku's little subterfuge didn't confuse the otaku in the least, and they too are keeping an eye on Diana in order to track any party that tries to extract her and so learn who sent her to them.

Setup

A middle-aged man claiming to be Stuart Peng contacts the runners, either directly or through a fixer. He explains to the runners that his daughter Diana became involved in a strange cult called the Beamwalkers the previous year and disappeared completely a few months back. Several weeks ago, he received an anonymous tip that his daughter was at the Stasky Institute, a small private clinic in Tacoma. He immediately went to the clinic and found that his daughter was indeed there, apparently having suffered a complete nervous breakdown. However, Mr. Peng could not prove his relationship to his daughter; Diana was checked in under the name "Olivia Tang" and possessed no identification. Because he could not prove his relationship to Diana, the clinic refused to tell him who admitted her. Mr. Peng suspects that the cult she belonged to is paying for his daughter's care. Again, because Mr. Peng is not financially responsible for Diana's expenses, the clinic will not permit him to remove her from their care. Legally, he has no access to his daughter; therefore, he tells the runners, he has decided to take her from the clinic illegally. He offers the runners a reasonable sum of money to recover his daughter, with a bonus if they can obtain evidence he can use in legal action against the Beamwalkers. "Stuart Peng" is actually a corporate expediter for Fuchi, allied with the Nakatomi family. The Nakatomis suspect that Renraku's otaku investigation was somehow connected with Richard Villiers' operations against Renraku, and they want to get hold of Diana to determine the exact nature of that connection. The real Stuart Peng is a midlevel corporate executive who believes his daughter to be on a special assignment with the Red Samurai.

The first-level files on Diana Peng describe her as a third-generation Renraku employee, twenty years old, working as a data entry clerk in the Seattle arcology's security division. Only a run deep into Renraku's more secure databases will reveal that she's actually a security agent herself, specializing in undercover operations. Her current mission is simply listed as "Classified," and her status is "M.I.A." Inquiries about the Beamwalkers describe them as a mysterious, reclusive urban tribe of young people from northern Puyallup. The group has a reputation for being very technically savvy, and a number of talented deckers were associated with the Beamwalkers in their younger days. Rumors tie the tribe to the otaku, but there is no hard evidence linking the two groups.

Event 1

The Stasky Institute is a two-story clinic specializing in neurological dysfunctions. Located in a small medical park near Doctor's Hospital of Tacoma, the Institute conducts its business in a fairly well-to-do part of town. Security at the hospital is geared more toward keeping patients in than keeping intruders out, but Lone Star frequently patrols the area. Patient records show that "Olivia Tang" was admitted into the clinic in May of 2059, suffering from "cognitive dissociation" and a host of even less comprehensible medical terms—in layman's terms, she is suffering from brain damage that impedes her ability to understand and relate to the world around her. She does display an obsessive interest in cyberdecks and the Matrix, though she is in no condition to operate a deck. The records state that she was admitted by her father, Roger Tang, who pays the Institute monthly via certified credstick. The Tang identities are fakes, good enough to fool the clinic's admissions system, but little more.

Diana Peng occupies a second-floor room near the back of the complex, boasting a single small window too narrow for any adult to fit through. The runners will have to get inside the building to extract Diana from her room. If they can avoid the Lone Star patrols outside, they should be able to get to her quite easily; there are a few security guards on duty in the clinic, but they will be far outmatched by the average shadowrunner. A decker who hacks into the clinic's Matrix system may occasionally catch glimpses of movement or feel as though he is being watched; a Beamwalker otaku is watching for any clues to surface regarding Diana's origin. In an attempt to make the runners tip their hands, the otaku will trip the clinic's alarm as the runners leave the building, forcing them to escape from Lone Star pursuit (which makes them easier to track).

Event 2

When the runners contact "Stuart Peng" for instructions regarding the drop point, he asks the runners to meet him at the Villa Plaza mall, sounding pleased at their success and anxious to have his daughter with him again. During the short ride from the clinic to the mall, Diana seems to take no notice of the world around her; she stares into space and hums quietly to herself. If someone spends the tremendous effort required to communicate with her, she will only reply, "Back?" in an eager voice. If she catches sight of a cyberdeck, however, she will go wild trying to get to it, screaming, "Back! Back! Back!" at the top of her lungs. Diana possesses a high-quality datajack implant, currently plugged with an epoxy stopper. Careful examination also reveals a retractable spur installed in her forearm, also of very high quality, of which she appears to be totally unaware.

As soon as the runners broke Diana out of the clinic, Renraku began tracing her by means of a tracking signal implanted along with her headware memory. Renraku riggers follow the runners with high-altitude surveillance drones while ground troops position themselves in an ambush. A few miles short of the drop point, a pair of unmarked Chrysler-Nissan Patrol-I cars, each containing three Renraku company men and a rigger, block the runners' route. They demand that the runners turn over the girl and will fight to get her, though they use less deadly tactics than usual in order not to risk hurting Diana. If the runners flee, the Renraku goons will pursue, calling in magical back-up if they deem it necessary.

Climax

The runners meet their employer at the entrance to the Villa Plaza mall, just outside a Hardware Etcetera store. "Stuart Peng," along with a few plainclothes Fuchi guards, is there to pick her up and pay off the runners. Halfway through the meet, a gang of urban tribals (the Beamwalkers) surrounds the group and demands that the suits release Diana. Distracted by the interruption, neither the runners nor the Fuchi agents react fast enough to stop Diana from running toward the entrance to Hardware Etcetera when she sees a window display of cyberdecks. The entrance to the store immediately opens for her, even if the mall is closed for the night—the Beamwalkers followed Diana's tracking signal too, having detected

the bug while she was undergoing the Deep Resonance, and the tribe's otaku have taken over Villa Plaza's security system. Other tribe members are waiting inside to lead her to safety. If the runners decide that Diana doesn't belong on any side of this tug-of-war and decide to take her somewhere else, they must contend with the Beamwalkers, Diana's Fuchi guards, mall security and any surviving Renraku pursuers, all while playing a cat-and-mouse game in an environment the Beamwalkers control.

Sequels

If the run hits the public datasheets, the real Stuart Peng will spare no expense to track down the runners and find out what happened to his daughter.

Though originally sent to spy on the Beamwalkers, she no longer poses any threat to the otaku, and the tribe seems to have taken a belated liking to her. Depending on how the characters behaved toward Diana and the Beamwalkers during the run, they may find their faces plastered all over the mall closed-circuit security records or may find all evidence of their crimes erased. Any runners who feel the need to discuss their encounter with the otaku may discover annoying and even dangerous Matrix problems awaiting them.

If Diana survives the events of this adventure, one of the runners will spot her entering the Renraku arcology's mall a few weeks later. She seems to disappear as soon as she steps inside, and the runners can find no trace of her. This event takes places regardless of whose custody she is in at the end of the adventure. While her mind no longer functions in any way that allows her to live a useful life in the outside world, the otaku apparently still find her useful despite her condition.

PROVE IT TO ME

Premise

Yuklaka Watanabe, Renraku's chairman of the board, is highly suspicious of Miles Lanier's professed loyalty to Renraku. Despite his presence on the board of Renraku for several months and the inside information he has supplied on Fuchi, she distrusts his motives and is repulsed by his personality. Before Lanier becomes inextricably immersed in Renraku's internal affairs, she arranges for a series of covert operations to test his loyalty.

Setup

The runners are contacted through the Matrix by a Mr. Johnson who wants to hire their services for an extended series of "diverse" activities in Boston. Mr. Johnson uses a generic UMS icon, but clearly has the support of heavy-hitting deckers and utilities. Though vague about details and time frames, he offers good nuyen. If pressed for information, he will admit to needing the runners for the "testing of new security measures."

Event 1

As soon as the team establishes a base of operations in Boston, their Johnson contacts them and provides them with a dossier on Miles Lanier, including his residence, offices, LTG numbers and what is known of his upcoming schedule. Johnson expects them to run careful surveillance on Lanier, including tapping his communications and investigating his activities and everyone he contacts. Johnson arranges for surveillance gear as needed and also for periodic check-ins through the Matrix.

Let the runners go to work, and create some low-level innocuous excitement for them. Lanier's activities during this period are rather mundane, but even on boring days he doubtlessly talks to some interesting people. Because he also made his living as a security specialist, the task should be challenging. Create some mishaps during their surveillance to make it interesting, such as a paranoid exec spotting the runners and thinking they're watching him or her. Perhaps the runners dig up some interesting dirt that has absolutely nothing to do with Lanier. No matter what the runners find, Mr. Johnson does not seem satisfied with the information.

Event 2

The results of the runners' investigation are no surprise to Watanabe; she expects Lanier to be subtle. She decides to act boldly and passes on information to the runners through Mr. Johnson about an upcoming forum and gala exhibit on marine biology that Lanier will be attending. The formal event will be held at the New England Aquarium and will be attended by many executives whose companies are engaged in genengineering marine life. The runners are instructed to make an assassination attempt on Lanier, with an emphasis on the attempt. If the runners balk at this, Johnson stresses that this is merely a test of security measures, and that the attempt is not actually intended to succeed.

Unknown to the runners, Watanabe has anonymously leaked word on the "hit" to Fuchi Internal Security officers loyal to Villiers. She has also discreetly placed Renraku agents throughout the area, specifically to watch for any attempt on Fuchi's part to protect Lanier. Villiers does in fact send agents to foil the plot, but they spot the Renraku agents and smell a rat. The runners may also notice something amiss and abort the fake hit, or they may follow through and create total pandemonium at the aquarium. The Fuchi agents do not interfere with the assassination attempt, but they do dodge the Renraku goons and try to track the runners and nab them for questioning afterward.

Event 3

Watanabe, also unsatisfied with the assassination ploy, decides to attempt to frame Lanier. Through Mr. Johnson, she instructs the runners' decker to pose as a disenchanted Renraku employee looking to sell confidential Renraku information to the highest bidder. In addition to posting his offer on several Matrix shadowboards, the decker is given contact numbers for a suspected agent of Lanier. To make the offer enticing, the decker is also given a file containing partial codework to a new piece of Renraku Tar Pit IC to use as bait.

Along with several other replies (which could lead to interesting sidetracks), Lanier's agent, a decker by the name of Phaze, contacts the runners and suggests a Matrix meeting. Mr. Johnson instructs the runners to agree to the meet.

Johnson prepares the runners' decker for the encounter by outfitting him or her with a set of one-shot, Rating 10 scanner and tracking programs. He also will assign two Renraku combat deck-

ers to back up the runners if requested. Watanabe wants the runner to sell the information to Phaze and then trace him so that he can be physically captured. She then hopes to use his testimony to indict Lanier on charges of corporate espionage—secretly purchasing Renraku technology that he has not been cleared for yet with intent to sell it to Fuchi.

Phaze arranges the virtual meeting at Rox Rootz, a Matrix "bar" frequented by deckers from the Boston plex. Inside a rented, IC-protected secure meeting node, he will negotiate and purchase the Renraku data. Once the transfer is completed, he will look at the data and realize it is still incomplete. At the first sign of hostility, he'll call up some decker buddies from Rox Rootz. If things look bad, he'll attempt to log off. If the runners succeed in tracing him, they find that he's decking from an illegal Matrix hookup in a squat in Boston's Rox area. Just as the runners arrive at the scene, he is rescued by heavily armed and well-dressed corporate types.

Climax

On the verge of giving up her attempts to crack Lanier's cover, Watanabe decides to try one last scenario when a Fuchi agent is unmasked and captured by Renraku security. She has the captured mole transported to Boston, where he is to be handed over to the runners, who will baby-sit him and then use him as bait. She plans to pass rumors of the mole's exposure through the Renraku grapevine to Lanier, hoping that he'll attempt to extract the Fuchi operative.

Unfortunately for the runners, Lanier's excellent security staff has caught on to them. As some of the runners rendezvous with Renraku to pick up the prisoner, Lanier sends in a well-trained team equipped with nonlethal weaponry and captures the rest of the runners.

The remaining runners, now with their Fuchi hostage, will be in a tight spot. Whether by interrogating the captive runners or by hearing the rumors, Lanier will find out about the captured Fuchi agent. By this time, the runners are also being watched by a squad of Red Samurai, who are also hoping to catch Lanier doing something he shouldn't. Lanier's team will contact the runners and arrange a trade-off, but the Red Samurai are going to crash the party.

At no point will Miles Lanier personally involve himself. He is careful to handle such matters with "deniable assets"; the men and women he uses will admit working for Lanier only under extreme duress, but they will never admit to working for Fuchi. They know nothing of Lanier's true plans or loyalties, so they cannot harm him by revealing such information. No matter what happens, Lanier cannot be proved to have any remaining connection to Fuchi based on the events in this adventure. All evidence will be inconclusive, at best. Let the runners wonder . . .

Sequels

Unable to bring any charges against Lanier, Watanabe will give up her investigation and grudgingly permit him more open access to Renraku secrets. For his part, Lanier will continue playing good Renraku citizen for the duration of his stay. Depending on how things went, the runners may feel a bit used by Renraku, but all they have to go on is Mr. Johnson's faceless UMS icon—

and that's not enough information to effectively trace him. If they manage to track him down or find a way to attack him, they may find themselves on the receiving end of a surprise visit by the Red Samurai. The runners also may simply choose to take their lumps and try to pick up some other biz while they're in Boston, in which case they may get involved in one or more of the scenarios described in **Target: UCAS.**

WHAT DOES A TEN-THOUSAND-YEAR-OLD DRAGON GET?

Premise

The mysterious disappearance of the elf genius Leonardo has worried and disturbed more parties than just Renraku. The great dragon Hestaby recently cemented an alliance with him and now is quite interested in his status and whereabouts. She is especially interested in certain plans he was pursuing for his Great Work that she now fears he has abandoned. Having personally investigated the site of his destroyed sanctuary in Africa, she employs the runners to track down any leads Renraku may have to Leonardo's current situation. Of course, there are others interested in unveiling, or suppressing, information on Leonardo ...

Setup

The runners are contacted by a friendly, tanned California shaman named Breeze. Despite his neo-hippie attire and attitude, Breeze's resources and information seem to indicate the backing of someone with major influence. He asks the runners to investigate the disappearance of a strange man who calls himself Leonardo. He provides a picture, a computer-scanned portrait of the famous inventor Leonardo da Vinci, yet describes his metatype as elf. Smiling at the raised eyebrows the runners undoubtedly give him, he offers an extremely generous reward if the runners will travel to an isolated locale in Iran and research the man and his work. He will supply expertly falsified identification for the team as well as suborbital tickets to Baghdad and a helicopter transport from there to the small town of Ahvaz.

Event 1

Once the runners make it through the usual rigmarole of international travel on faked IDs, they rendezvous with their Hughes Stallion helicopter at the Baghdad airport. If the team lacks a rotor-capable rigger, they will be blessed with the presence of Spin Doctor, a very unsociable ork rigger imported from California for the occasion. Onboard, they find a small arsenal of non-lethal weaponry and a chip with maps and tidbits of what seems to be a futuristic, high-tech observatory in the middle of nowhere.

As they approach what passes for a landing strip near Ahvaz, what passes for the local air traffic control challenges the presence of the helicopter over the radio in Arabic. Assuming the runners can translate the message, they are being ordered to identify themselves and their mission in the name of Abu Khalid or be shot down.

Whether they comply or not, they will soon discover that what remains of the town of Ahvaz is under occupation by Abu Khalid and his Black-and-Red-Revolutionaries. This force, with their strange mixture of high-tech and archaic weapons and vehicles (or, in most cases, horses), will attempt to capture and interrogate the team. Through surveillance, sympathetic locals or interrogation, the runners should determine that the Revolutionaries only recently occupied the area, driving off what remained of a Renraku military unit. Any locals who remain will recognize pictures of Leonardo and claim he was their patron until recently when the *simurg* came, and that he lived in the observatory. Quick-witted runners will realize that by *simurg*, the locals are talking about a dragon that destroyed the observatory.

Event 2

The runners soon find out that their mission objective, the observatory, is Abu Khalid's temporary command center. When they finally sneak into the compound or get dragged as captives to the tower, they find it to be mostly gutted and burned. Almost everything inside has been destroyed. However, the runners may notice both the behind-the-scenes presence of some German-speaking "military advisers" and some salvaged Renraku computer equipment.

The advisers are in fact military officers of Saeder-Krupp. After the observatory was demolished, Lofwyr hired Abu Khalid and his roving band to drive what remained of the Renraku troops off the site and secure it, which they did. These officers are now present to make sure everything was destroyed and to discourage any investigations. They will torture any captured runners in order to learn about their mission before handing the infidels over to Abu and his men.

Even if the runners gain access to the surviving Renraku gear, they will be unable to salvage anything useful regarding Leonardo. The only clues will be pointers to a Renraku matrix host and what appears to be a specific filename: "MLI Zeta Five." They may also salvage an optical chip unlike any they've ever seen, which is protected by unbreakable encryption algorithms.

There is no other remaining evidence regarding Leonardo. He disappeared the night the dragon came, and the occupying troops believe him to be dead. It's now up to the runners to escape and continue their mission, either by stealing another helicopter (the only vehicle at the airstrip), calling up Breeze and demanding an emergency airlift or hoofing it out through bandit country. Unless the runners have a deck with a satellite uplink, there is no Matrix access for hundreds of miles, and cellular phone coverage is spotty at best.

Event 3

Once the runners have gotten somewhere they can jack in, they can deck the Renraku host, which benchmarks around Red-8. Oddly enough, no references to Leonardo appear in the host. A successful Dump Log or Edit File operation will determine that all files with any references to Leonardo were systematically erased on the same day that Leonardo disappeared. Several successes on the test will reveal a sophisticated virus as the culprit.

If a decker performs a successful Locate File operation for "MLI Zeta Five," he will not find a file as expected, only a strange "Slave Syntax Error" message and a pointer to a partially deleted personnel file—that of Kuzi Kaneda, personal aide to Renraku COO Haruhiko Nakada. If the decker performs a successful Locate/Slave operation, he will discover an interesting icon that an Analyze

Icon Test identifies as an encoder system for someone equipped with data lock headware. The Icon information also happens to provide the current frequency for the transponder built into Kineda's headware.

The runners should make the connection that the only info on Leonardo that Renraku still possesses is in Kineda's head. When they track him down, they learn that he is booked on a suborbital scheduled to land in San Francisco in a matter of hours . . . just enough time for the runners to get there and meet him. If the runners insist on hanging around in the Renraku system and performing extended Matrix searches for clues regarding Leonardo, they're likely to pick up a nasty virus or even find a Saeder-Krupp strike team on their tail.

Climax

Typically, the runners' flight is plagued with delays, and they arrive at San Fran to a warm welcome of sirens, running guards and distant autofire. That's right, someone else just snatched their mark and departed the airport in a stealth-equipped whirlybird. The runners have no choice but to pursue. Whether they steal their own bird or hustle to hire themselves something much faster, allow the runners to catch up with their competition (perhaps the other craft was damaged when escaping the airport) just short of the border between northern California and Tir Tairngire, near Shasta Mountain.

With their opponents clearly racing to cross the Tir border, the runners must figure out a way to down the other copter. The occupants, a team of Tir Ghosts that includes at least one physical adept and one initiated mage, will radio the Tir for back-up. They have been sent by Ehran the Scribe to accomplish basically the same task as the runners. The runners will not have much time to steal Mr. Kineda before they're neck-deep in elves.

If the runners have been keeping Breeze updated on their situation, he may provide some useful assistance at this point. The Shamans of Shasta may show up in force to aid the runners, perhaps calling upon spirits and forest critters, using the clear and present threat of a Tir incursion as a justification for their actions. This subtle show of force by Hestaby and her minions will be enough to drive the elves back across the border.

Sequels

Breeze will rendezvous with the runners near Mount Shasta and accept custody of Mr. Kineda as the consummation of their contract. Now Hestaby will have the datalocked information, but she will still need the codes to access it. Renraku will also be searching for its kidnapped employee, using his implanted transponder to track him. Because Mr. Kineda's head contains quite a bit of paydata, they will not hesitate to activate his cortex bomb to eliminate the threat to their security. Ehran and the Tir elves are also interested in data regarding Leonardo. While they may be interested in persuading Hestaby to share, they may be equally interested in punishing the runners for interfering with their plans. Finally, there is the mysterious encrypted optical chip, which may contain the only clues left to finding Leonardo and learning about his Great Work.

THIS HURTS ME MORE THAN IT HURTS YOU

Premise

HyperSense is a small, offbeat simsense production company that specializes in unusual recording techniques and creative editing. Nearing bankruptcy two years ago, owner Jacob Kitt struck a deal with Renraku in which he maintained 49 percent of the corp and his position as CEO, while Renraku acquired a 51 percent controlling interest in the company and established it as a testing lab for new simsense gear and production methods. Renraku began channeling spin offs from their Leonardo technology into HyperSense, hoping they could extrapolate some new simsense cutting techniques and turn the company around. Though it has not been reported to Renraku, the research actually hit pay dirt, but Kitt has chosen to keep it under wraps. He's worried by all the mega-corp conflict appearing on the trid lately, and he sees the chance to regain control of his minor corp by exploiting the wiz new advances. He's come up with a plan to fake a hit on HyperSense and so persuade Renraku to divest themselves of the company.

Setup

Kitt dresses up as a Mr. Johnson and approaches the runners in a nightclub or other haunt to offer them a job. He's twitchier than a speed freak with used wired reflexes, but the job he proposes seems pretty straightforward. All he wants is for the runners to hit a minor corp facility protected by low security and torch their main building. He really doesn't want the runners to kill anybody, so he will ask them to use nonlethal weapons and won't hire them if they seem too bloodthirsty. If they agree, he gives them the name HyperSense and the general location, and even tells them how to bypass the weak security. If the runners get twitchy themselves, Kitt has rented a pair of yakuza thugs for the night, paying them to watch his back but stay out of his business. He'll make a feeble attempt to haggle over price, but it should be pretty clear he's not experienced with the Johnson routine.

Because there are many different directions the runners can go in this framework, this adventure does not provide a suggested schedule of events. Rather, many of the various events that can or will occur are described below. The order in which they take place is up to the gamemaster and the actions of the runners.

Legwork Events

If the runners have any clue at all about taking on shadowruns, they'll do some legwork first. If they start researching HyperSense through contacts or the Matrix, just about everything Johnson told them seems true. Buried among the loads of other boring info-drek will be Kitt's name, and if the runners search, they will come up with a photo of him that allows them to recognize him as their Johnson. Why he wants them to torch his own corp is something they're going to have to really dig to find out.

Assuming the runners scope out HyperSense's physical site, they find security to be pathetic, just as promised. The run looks like a cakewalk. Any decking into its Matrix host may come up with details of HyperSense's new developments, carefully encrypted and hidden away, though it will likely take someone with skill in simsense production to make heads or tails of it. It's all very experimental and high-tech, and if runners check, they

may connect it with a new brand of BTL on the street called Flashers, allegedly being distributed by the yaks.

The deeper the runners dig into the story, the more twisted roots they'll unearth. If they investigate the rest of HyperSense's shareholders, they'll find them to be a group of shell companies all owned by Renraku. Sifting through financial records should reveal that Renraku has sunk a fair bit of change into HyperSense without receiving much return on their investment. Jacob Kitt, on the other hand, apparently had a large influx of capital recently from an untraceable numbered account. Underworld connections may prove useful here, as Kitt received his loan from the yakuza in exchange for undisclosed services.

Tracing some of that money, or tailing Kitt around the city, will lead the runners to Kitt's new simsense-production facility in another part of town. Kept under wraps, the facility clearly just got up and running. The outside reveals nothing about what the building contains and is well-protected by yakuza gunmen and a decent security system.

At some point, the runners may want to have another chat with Mr. Johnson. He urges them to continue with the plan as agreed upon and to execute it as soon as possible. If they confront him with their knowledge that he owns HyperSense, he denies it vigorously ... a bit too vigorously. If they bring up the yakuza, he gets nervous. If the runners press the issue, he appears to break down and begins telling them that the yaks are forcing him to produce beetles (a pack of lies). He'll attempt to dissuade the runners from tangling with the yaks; if necessary, he will double his price and demand that the runners do the job he hired them for and get it over with. At that point, he refuses to talk any more and will avoid the runners until they do the job. If they back out, he'll hire another team, who will do the run and frame the player characters for it.

Yakuza Events

Anything more than a cursory investigation into HyperSense will quickly attract yakuza attention. In order to fund his plan, Kitt went to his local oyabun and leveraged himself in deep for some quick nuyen. The yaks, homing in on Kitt's weakness like a shark to blood, also convinced Kitt to use his new simsense production center to produce BTLs for them. Though it's only been in production for a few weeks, the beetle factory is proving highly lucrative. The oyabun is now keeping a close watch over his latest investment and will immediately attack anything or anyone that resembles interference with his plans. When the runners start asking questions, they become targets.

The yakuza will first approach the runners with a polite but very serious warning to stay away from HyperSense. When the runners ignore this warning, the yaks return to inflict damage. They will try to isolate one of the runners and hurt him badly, but not kill him, as a lesson to the others. If the runners still ignore their threats, the yaks will attempt to kill one runner at a time, hoping that the deaths of a few will spread wisdom to the many. Should this fail, the yakuza attacks will grow steadily larger and deadlier.

Eventually, the yaks will also find out that Kitt was not entirely up-front with them, as he failed to mention Renraku's controlling interest in HyperSense. The oyabun will be enraged at the prospect of Renraku stealing away his chip factory. The yaks will want to have a serious face-to-face discussion with Kitt regarding this breach of faith, a discussion that he'll do just about anything to avoid.

On the other end of the spectrum, anything that is beneficial for the yaks is a target for the Triads, Seoulpa Rings or Mafia. One of these groups may well be investigating the source of the new beetles on the street. Alternatively, if the situation gets totally out of hand, Kitt may run to the Mafia as a last resort.

Renraku Events

Hearing rumors of interest in HyperSense on the street, Renraku will suddenly wake up and smell the soykaf. They do some digging of their own and start to figure out that Kitt may be hiding something. It'll take them awhile to discover his secret new site, but they'll easily uncover strange financial indiscretions on his part. At some point they'll decide to detain Kitt for some questioning, but he'll go into hiding.

Once they start looking, Renraku will also find details on HyperSense's previously undisclosed technological advances. In order to keep their investment safe, they'll beef up security at HyperSense, predictably right before the runners try to hit the place. A building with a simple fence, video cameras and lazy guards suddenly transforms into an armed camp with motion detectors, sentry guns, patrolling spirits and Red Samurai.

When Renraku finally discovers the secret HyperSense site, they'll move quickly to seize it, touching off a battle with the yakuza. The situation will get awfully ugly quite fast, and in the end the new site may go up in flames, as one side chooses to destroy it rather than lose it to the other.

Sequels

If the runners do the run they were paid for and "destroy" HyperSense, and Renraku doesn't discover the existence of the new facility, the corp will divest itself of the money pit. If the runners subsequently decide to take advantage of their inside knowledge and hit the new HyperSense facility, word of their indiscretion will hit the streets, and all three parties will want a piece of the runners. The runners may also be facing the consequences of a long-term grudge from the yakuza, depending upon how events turn out. Finally, if Renraku does decide to sell their shares in HyperSense, they won't necessarily sell to Kitt, who's maxed out on loans already. They may sell to a rival ....

ADVENTURE IDEAS

This section provides additional short adventure ideas involving Renraku and other players involved in the corp's affairs. The gamemaster can flesh out these ideas as short or full-fledged adventures using the material in this book.

UNWILLING TRANSFER

In an effort to prove his loyalty to his new corporate home, Shiket Nakatomi decides to extract a few of his better researchers from what remains of Fuchi Asia and bring them to Renraku. The runners are hired to travel to the Philippines, kidnap a Filipino marine biologist from the Fuchi facility there and deliver him to Renraku's Underwater Living Project nearby. Unfortunately for the

runners, the biologist doesn't want to be kidnapped. His corporation was only bought out by Fuchi Asia a few months ago, and he's heard bad mojo about the Renraku ULP director. As soon as the runners relax their guard, he bails on them, running to his contacts in the rebel-pirate Huk Network for help. The runners face Renraku reprisals if they let him go, and risk angering the Huk if they pursue.

THE SQUEEZE

Thanks to information provided to Renraku by Miles Lanier to prove his loyalties, Renraku attempts to buy out a subsidiary of Fuchi that is held by the Yamana faction. The subsidiary, WasserKraft, is a Germany-based corp researching water pollution and purification through both magical and technological means. Renraku has successfully bought into the corp but needs to "persuade" the last remaining major shareholder to sell to them in order to gain a controlling share. Unwilling to accept the takeover attempt lying down, the shareholder, a rich elf named Delter Arkona, has told both Renraku and Fuchi to frag off.

Renraku hires the runners to lean on Mr. Arkona in whatever way they see fit, as long as they convince him to sell. The task will not be easy, as Arkona has a strong will and powerful friends, including the rulers of the elven Duchy of Pomorya, and Klabauterbund, a pollclub with connections to GreenWar and a band of North Sea pirates. If he has any skeletons in his closet, he's camouflaged them well, so if the runners seek to blackmail him they'll have to create a situation in which to embroil him. If the runners get too pesky, Arkona will try to ambush them and have them eliminated. As a last-ditch resort, and mainly to spite Renraku, he will turn to Fuchi for aid, and the runners may need to prevent him from selling to that corp!

PUBLIC SECRETS

Since Renraku lost track of Leonardo, not only are many Renraku databases exhibiting gaps in the information they contain, but some have also begun to reveal a bit too much information! Internal Renraku files, including classified holdings, financial transactions, secret research, illegal practices and confidential personnel files have begun appearing at random in Renraku public databases throughout the runners' home RTG.

A frightened Renraku system operator who is responsible for the hosts that are home to most of the revealed data contacts the runners for help. He's already figured out that he's up against more than a programming glitch, but he wants a little outside help to deal with the problem, primarily as a back-up to save face at Renraku.

Any deckers who investigate the problem will eventually encounter an icon that seems to be the source of the trouble. The icon, caught in the act of pillaging the Renraku host, turns out to be a semiautonomous knowbot (SK). If the runners attempt to stop or destroy it, it fights back, and a mysterious decker also comes to its aid. The runners should be able to trace these icons back to a partially crashed Fuchi host. Though Fuchi powered down the host system until it could be transferred to Novatech, the mystery decker apparently decided to take advantage of the temporarily abandoned system and juiced it partway up for his own use. Inside the host, he also found the dormant SK, which is a Fuchi corp war weapon, and managed to activate it with slightly different objectives.

If confronted, the stranger claims to be nothing more than an ordinary decker having some fun at the expense of a mega. As a master programmer, he is entranced by the opportunity to work with an SK's code. He's also an elite Aztechnology decker who's trying to figure out how to rewrite the SK's mission objectives so he can target other enemies as well. In order to do this, he needs to transfer the SK's source code to another machine where he can get Azzie help. If the runners interfere, he'll hire a decker gang, the Reality Hackers, to make life for the runners a living hell, both in the Matrix and meatworld.

TRANSYS NEUROMESS

Transys Neuronet, an AA rated corp based in the UK that stands close to the cutting edge in Matrix tech, has decided to take advantage of Fuchi's internal chaos and Renraku's recent setbacks to net themselves as much new tech as possible while the opportunity presents itself.

To achieve this goal, they hire a team of runners to first penetrate a Fuchi Asia facility. They equip the runners with identities previously planted in both the Fuchi and Renraku systems that tag the player characters as a top team of scientists employed by Fuchi Asia. Their forged credentials give the runners unlimited access to all areas of the facility, allowing them to loot secrets at will—until unexpected trouble arrives. A Fuchi Pan-Europa military force descends on the facility, claiming it for Yamana, and troops begin rounding up Nakatomi loyalists. Chaos breaks out, but just when it looks like the runners are going to be corralled, a Renraku strike team arrives and extracts the valuable Fuchi scientists."

Blindfolded and gagged, the runners are transported to a high-tech Renraku facility, where they have some tense moments passing themselves off as top-level programmers. Because Renraku keeps its newest acquisitions under close scrutiny, their cover identities quickly begin to erode. Unfortunately, the hot Transys deckers assigned to cover for the runners can't help them because they don't know where the runners were taken! If they hope to survive, the runners need to break out of confinement long enough to send a message to the Transys deckers for help, and/or break out on their own. Naturally, on their way out they nick as much Renraku gear and paydata as possible.

TRACK THREE: CROSS PURPOSES

MOTOR CITY MADNESS

● Welcome to the MegaWatch SIG, your source for all the news on the Big Eight megacorps—official and otherwise. Speak freely, but play nice!
● The Mgt

● Big news out of Detroit, people. Leonard Aurelius, the man whose daddy built Ares into what it is today, has apparently gotten tired of fighting Damien Knight for control of the corp. He's bailed out of Ares entirely; sold his stock and gone home.
● Pistol-Packin' Piston

● What?!? Aurelius was the only one in that corp with a shred of human decency, and the only thing keeping Damien Knight in check. What could Knight possibly have on Aurelius that would make him back down?
● Neon Samurai

● Control of the corp, that's what. Even after Knight lost control of the stock he got from Nadja Daviar, he still had the board of directors under his thumb. Aurelius spent years planning his takeover attempt in '41 and still couldn't get rid of Knight; he knew there was no chance he'd ever displace Knight completely. So he sold out, cut his losses and retired a very wealthy man.
● Fuga

● No way. Aurelius has dedicated his life to breaking Knight's strangehold on Ares. There's no way he'd back out unless Knight forced him out. I wouldn't be surprised if Knight kidnapped Aurelius' wife or one of his kids; that's exactly the way that twisted fragger likes to operate.
● Neon Samurai

● Well, whatever the reason. Aurelius is history. I'm more interested in the future, as in: who bought Aurelius out?
● EdgeRunner

● Nothing's been officially announced yet, but Damien Knight would be a fool to let an opportunity like this pass him by—and a fool he ain't. Expect to see him owning 45 percent of the company or so by this time next week.
● Pistol-Packin' Piston

● If the stock hit the open market, Knight would snap it up in a heartbeat, and he's got the bankroll to afford it. But I don't see anywhere near that amount of stock hitting the street. My guess is, Aurelius found a buyer (or buyers) and sold it privately.
● The Chromed Accountant
"It's all about dollars and sense."

● If Knight did squeeze Aurelius off the board, it makes sense he'd buy the stock directly in a private sale, to make sure he doesn't let a single share of it get away. Also, if Neon's suspicions are true, a direct sale to Knight eliminates the possibility of a friendly third party buying the shares and holding them for Aurelius until he wriggles out of Knight's trap. Of course, if Aurelius left for some reason other than coercion by our friend DK, he'd probably have tried to find a buyer privately rather than let Knight grab any more of Ares than he's already got.
● AAAbacus
"Count on me."

● My sources tell me Aurelius sold his stock to Arthur Vogel.
● Alfie

● Oh, sure. A has-been eco-freak comes up with a few billion nuyen to buy 20 percent of Ares—NULL. Vogel doesn't have the funding or the guts to go head-to-head with Damien Knight. Or should I say, head-to-belt buckle?
● Skeets

● Don't dismiss the idea so quickly. Vogel may not have that kind of cash personally, but he has a lot of connections. A surprising number of environmental activists are buying into Vogel's new "reform the corps from the inside" platform. Granted, there's no way he could raise that much money from them, but they could've given him a start. He may also have an in with Nadja Daviar and the Draco Foundation; they gave him the seat on Ares' board in the first place and gave Sierra, Inc. a big chunk of change right about the time Vogel took over. I can see Daviar floating Vogel the money to buy out Aurelius just because it would torque off Knight. And if she starts voting Gavilan's shares his way as well, Vogel becomes a bigger player within Ares than anyone else—including Knight.
● AAAbacus
"Count on me."

● What about Cross Applied Technologies? I hear old man Cross has a big hate on for Ares. They'd probably love to get hold of any of their main competitor's stock.
● EdgeRunner

● Could be, but I don't think Cross can afford a purchase like that. Knight's wanted to take CAT out for a long time, and if they laid out that much cash to buy Ares stock, Ares could turn around and take over Cross wholesale. Hell, Knight could probably take over Cross now if Ares wanted to. I'm a little surprised he hasn't done it already.
● Hopalong

● I've heard rumors about a big virus that messed up some of Renraku's computer systems. They call it the "Babel virus." Cross's best cyberdecks are called the Babel series: you think there's a connection? Maybe Cross developed some kind of new supervirus, and that's what Knight is afraid of.
● Frookie

● No.
● Ronin

● You sound pretty sure of yourself. What do you know about it?
● Frookie

● Let's just say I know the creator of the Babel virus personally. He doesn't work for Cross, or for anyone else anymore.
● Ronin

● So there really is a Babel virus?
● Frookie

● Not anymore.
● Ronin

● Getting back to the point, what do you all think ol' Lenny'll do with all his spare time and money? Somehow, I don't see him spending his retirement fly-fishing.
● Zeb

● I bet he hooks up with another megacorp. Maybe he'll join Villiers and Novatech; the more American megacorps there are, the more competition there will be for Knight, and Aurelius has gotta like that.
● Skeels

● I don't think Villiers would let him. After surviving twenty-five years with Yamana and Nakatomi, the last thing he'll want is to hook up with another partner. Novatech is going to be Villiers' baby all the way.
● Kaptain Krude

● Maybe Aurelius will join forces with Yamana and Nakatomi to rebuild Fuchi. They need a financial boost fast, or Fuchi's going to implode. And the way the Tokyo Stock Exchange fell last month, Aurelius could buy a big chunk of any Japanacorp he wanted to. You'd think he'd learn from Villiers' example, though. The Japanese don't have much use for other folks.
● AAAbacus
"Count on me."

● Are you kidding? If anybody in the corporate world learned from experience, we'd all be out of work.
● Hopalong

WHAT'S GOING DOWN

In 2033, Damien Knight appeared out of nowhere and set the business world on its ear. In the space of sixty-three seconds, a sequence of expertly programmed stock transactions made Knight the owner of 22 percent of Ares Macrotechnology, the UCAS's largest corporation. Knight promptly convinced Ares' board of directors to make him CEO and chairman of the board, leaving former CEO Leonard Aurelius behind to pick up the pieces. Since that day, Aurelius and Knight have warred for control of Ares, with neither able to gain a clear advantage. Today, Knight's influence extends far beyond the Ares boardroom, with his long-time friend Kyle Haeffner occupying the Oval Office. He still dominates Ares and is one of the most powerful men in the world. But powerful men have enemies, and when those enemies get together, even powerful men can be vulnerable.

This section describes the history of Ares Macrotechnology and Cross Applied Technologies, two corporations locked in a bitter struggle for power.

ARES MACROTECHNOLOGY HISTORY

The history of Ares Macrotechnology begins with the foresight of one man—Nicholas Aurelius of Detroit. A wealthy businessman, Aurelius sat on the board of the General Motors Corporation and numerous other Detroit-area companies, some of which he owned. When the Shiawase decision of 2001 granted large corporations extraterritoriality, Aurelius immediately realized that the Supreme Court had changed the future of business—and he swiftly took advantage of it. Consolidating his control over a variety of smaller businesses, he merged them into Ares Industries in 2002. With luck and business acumen—and, according to some versions of the story, no small amount of corporate espionage—Aurelius began to build Ares into a corporate giant. He was perceived as a gambler, but his gambles usually won big. By 2012, Ares had already grown large enough to become a founder of the Inter-Corporate Council, the forerunner of the modern Corporate Court.

The gamble that set the pace for Ares' future growth came in 2016, when the United States government found itself tottering on the brink of bankruptcy in the wake of the Ghost Dance Rebellion. Recognizing the hefty profits to be made by taking over government programs on which so many corporations depended, and interested in expanding into the aerospace field, Aurelius offered to buy the entire U.S. space program. At the time, space exploration was not a high priority for the United States, which was still dealing with the aftermath of the Ghost Dance Rebellion, the VITAS epidemic and the realities of trying to govern in a magically Awakened world. Desperately needing money for more pressing concerns, President Jesse Garrety pushed the Ares agreement through Congress in August of 2016. The U.S. space program, including ground-based facilities, vehicles and orbital equipment, belonged to Ares Industries, though Aurelius agreed to return portions of the equipment to the U.S. government in 2055.

Aurelius had mortgaged virtually all of Ares Industries in order to make the NASA purchase, and industry experts believed he had finally pushed his luck too far. Undeterred, Aurelius began an ambitious program of salvaging defunct, abandoned or los

satellites and orbital equipment. Ares shuttles plucked the satellites from orbit and returned them to the *Freedom* space station, whose decaying orbit Ares had stabilized shortly after acquiring it. On *Freedom*, the satellites were examined and particularly interesting components analyzed, copied or simply kept for Ares' own use. Ares returned most of the equipment to its original owners—a variety of private corporations and national governments—in return for a substantial salvage fee. The owners got a chance to reuse valuable communications and surveillance equipment for a fraction of the cost of purchasing new gear, while Ares had a steady influx of cash and new materials—including a great deal of unregistered military hardware—for its research labs. Eventually Ares added regularly scheduled launches of new equipment into orbit and soon dominated the revitalized space industry.

Nicholas Aurelius continued buying other corporations that made a good match with Ares' existing businesses, and his luck continued to hold. By 2018, Ares Industries had become one of the ten largest corporations in the world. In that same year Ares began construction of its own orbital platform, *Apollo*, and moved most of its orbital operations there from *Freedom* over the next two years. In 2020, Ares sold *Freedom* to the Zurich Gemeinschaft Bank of Switzerland, which renamed the station Zurich Orbital. The Corporate Court relocated to Zurich Orbital in 2023, and Zurich Gemeinschaft moved its own international headquarters to the station in 2034. Ares continued to enlarge and develop the *Apollo* orbital platform, eventually renaming it *Daedalus*, and maintained its position as the world's leading space exploration company.

Aurelius maintained firm control of Ares Industries, though his name was not always at the top of the corporation's letterhead. In 2023, he briefly yielded the CEO's chair to board member Sakelasa Tajika in an effort to reduce stress in his life; Tajika renamed the corporation Ares Macrocybernology in 2024 and during his short tenure continued the corporation's steady growth. Though pleased to know that his corporation could outlive him, Aurelius soon realized that he couldn't be happy on the corporation's board without being in charge. He returned as chairman and CEO in 2028, just in time to guide Ares through the Crash of '29 and its immediate aftereffects. This feat sapped much of his remaining energy; he retired in 2030, this time for good. His son Leonard took over as chairman and CEO. Though somewhat more conservative than his father, Leonard proved a competent leader and seemed ready to continue Ares' growth and prosperity well into the next decade.

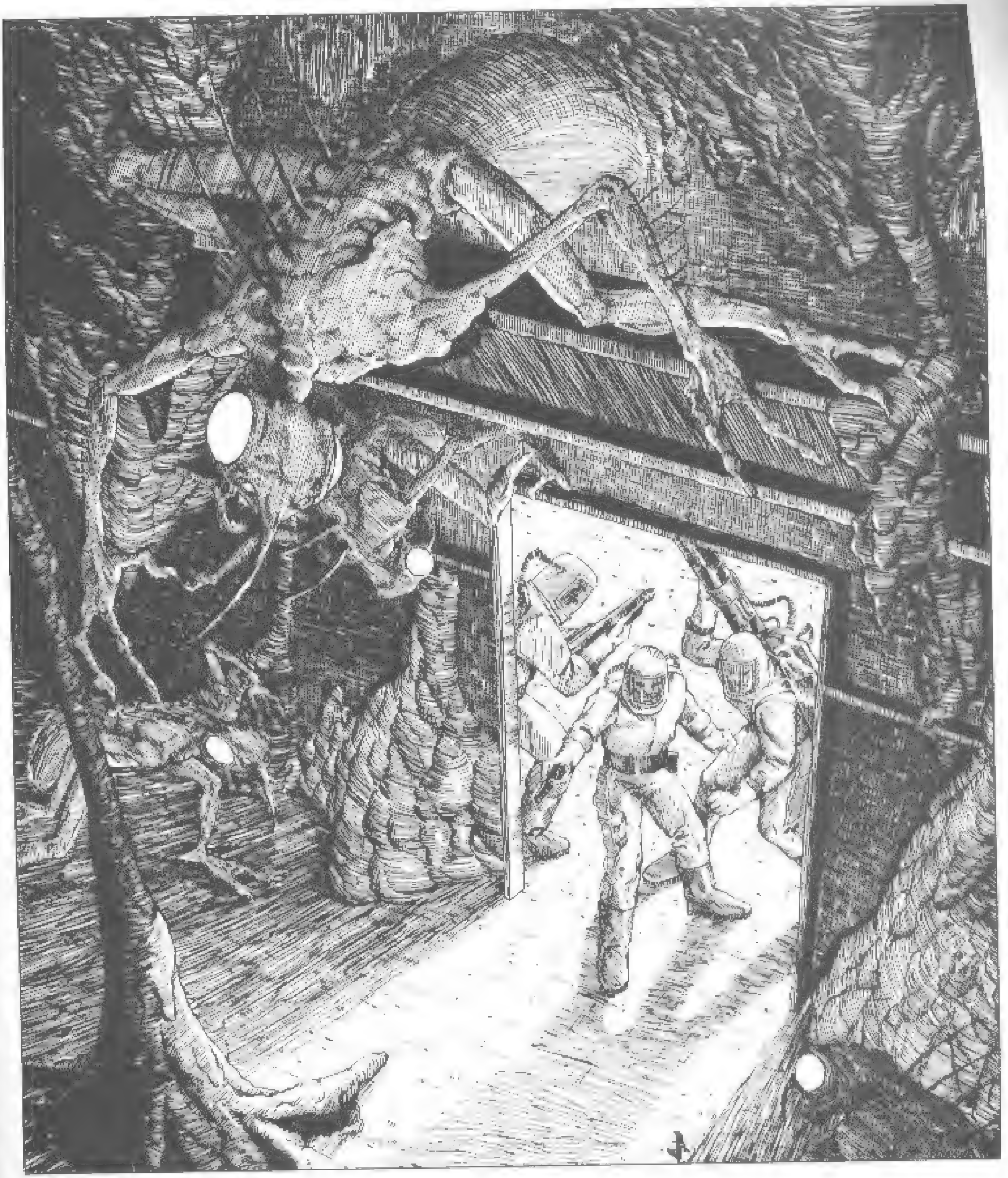
In 2033, however—the same year that Nicholas Aurelius succumbed to a fatal heart attack—everything changed for Ares with the infamous Nanosecond Buyout. An expertly programmed bank of computers in Stockholm, Sweden, came on-line and performed [illegible] ordinary planned stock transactions lasting approximately sixty-three seconds. At the end of that time, a previously [illegible] individual named Damien Knight had acquired 22 percent of Ares Macrotechnology's outstanding stock, an amount second only to what Leonard Aurelius himself owned. Knight immediately presented himself to Ares' board of directors and proposed himself as the company's new CEO and chairman. The board stunned by Knight's sudden appearance and impressed by the apparent ease with which he had obtained so much stock, agreed—much to the dismay of Leonard Aurelius. Knight gained control of a megacorporation on that day, but he also made a lifelong enemy.

Dunkelzahn also became a major shareholder in Ares during the Nanosecond Buyout, though he concealed his involvement behind a holding company named Gavilan Ventures. Dunkelzahn used Gavilan Ventures' shares of Ares to help Knight maintain control of the corporation. Both Knight and Aurelius owned roughly 22 percent of Ares, and Gavilan/Dunkelzahn owned 12 percent more—not enough to give either party complete control of the corp, but enough to swing most decisions the way Dunkelzahn wanted them to go. The dragon occasionally claimed some compensation for his efforts, most notably when he induced Ares to sell him VisionQuest Entertainment in 2037.

Knight led Ares to even greater heights of prosperity than it had previously seen. In addition to the continued success of AresSpace, Knight made the Ares Arms division a primary moneymaker, created the enormously successful Knight Errant Security division and greatly expanded Ares' international operations. In the meantime, Leonard Aurelius remained on the board of directors and tried to reclaim his position as chairman and CEO by fair means or foul. His complex maze of shell corporations and skilled proxy manipulation enabled him to gain a partial success in 2041, when Knight was voted out of the chairman's seat. Unfortunately, Aurelius didn't have enough leverage to get himself voted in, and the board elected former CEO Sakelasa Tajika as the new chairman. Knight remained CEO and took over the chairman's seat again in 2043 amid increasing evidence of Tajika's senility. Several more years passed before Aurelius tried again. In 2049, he successfully voted Knight out of the chairman's position again and took it over himself. However, Knight held on to his position as CEO through the intervention of Dunkelzahn, who voted his shares of Gavilan Ventures in such a way as to keep Knight CEO and Leonard Aurelius as chairman. Whatever his motive, the effect was to prevent either man from gaining full control of the corporation. Their rivalry moved to other areas, and shadowruns within Ares became commonplace, particularly in Detroit. The corporation's next major challenge, however, arose a bit farther west, in Chicago.

Bugs and Dragons

In the early 2050s, rumors of the mysterious entities known as insect spirits began to surface, and Damien Knight—possibly acting on the advice of Dunkelzahn—quietly directed Ares' resources toward investigating these rumors. In 2055, Ares agents discovered evidence of the largest insect spirit hive known to date, located on the edge of a South Side Chicago neighborhood. On August 22, Knight Errant troops attacked the hive. Unfortunately, the raid merely unleashed the bug spirits on Chicago's unwitting population. The UCAS government quickly moved to quarantine the affected area, under the pretense that it was containing a new outbreak of the VITAS plague, and Knight Errant troops shouldered most of the responsibility for guarding the so-called Containment Zone. During a second raid in early October, Ares forces detonated a subtactical nuclear weapon within the insect hive. However, this assault proved no more suc-



cessful than the previous one. In the wake of this second failure, Knight Errant and UCAS troops retreated outside the Containment Zone, leaving those within it to their fate.

Predictably, the truth about Chicago soon emerged and provoked something of a backlash against Ares. Though some applauded Ares and Knight Errant for trying to destroy the insect spirits, many felt that Ares had acted irresponsibly in attacking the hive without warning the local population. Ares' reputation took another knock when Knight Errant troops responsible for policing Ares' hometown of Detroit brutally put down riots between Detroit natives and Chicago refugees. No formal charges were filed, but the incidents left a stain on Ares' public image. The UCAS government attempted to take advantage of the situation by demanding that Ares return certain orbital assets, as the corporation had agreed to do when it bought NASA in 2016. Ares pointed out that it had promised to return the equipment to the government of the United States of America, which no longer existed. The UCAS countered that, because they had taken responsibility for the United States' debts, they also had a right to debts owed to the U.S.A. The CAS also laid claim to the space equipment, as most of the facilities in question were located within its territory. Of course, Damien Knight had no intention of cutting into AresSpace's profits by giving anything it owned to anyone, and he fought hard on his native battlefield—the corporate boardroom and the courts. After several years of insanely complex and hideously expensive litigation, both national governments let the matter drop.

Damien Knight also played a role in the special presidential election of 2057, strongly supporting the Dunkelzahn/Kyle Haeffner ticket. Haeffner, the vice-presidential nominee, was a former lawyer and philanthropist from Boston who had apparently known Knight for years. Knight and Ares spent a great deal of money promoting Dunkelzahn's campaign and contributed greatly to the dragon's victory. After Dunkelzahn's assassination, Knight Errant stepped in to help suppress the riots that racked the UCAS as news of the dragon's death spread. Kyle Haeffner, newly sworn in as president, knew that the UCAS military and National Guard could not contain the riots without assistance and eagerly accepted Ares' help. In a marked change from their behavior in Detroit a few years earlier, the Knight Errant and Ares Arms troops put down the riots efficiently and without needless violence, earning a debt of gratitude from the UCAS government and removing almost all traces of anti-Ares feeling in the UCAS.

In the aftermath of Dunkelzahn's assassination, another significant event went almost unnoticed by those outside Ares. Nadja Daviar, Dunkelzahn's former translator and recently sworn in as vice president of the UCAS, inherited Gavilan Ventures—and the Ares stock it controlled—from the dead dragon. Leonard Aurelius, knowing that Daviar despised Knight, thought he had finally found his chance to supplant Knight as Ares' CEO. But before he could approach her, Daviar signed the proxy rights for the Gavilan stock over to Knight for a two-year period. Her reasons remain unclear, though rumor has it that Knight either blackmailed Daviar or threatened someone close to her. With personal control over 34 percent of Ares' voting stock, Knight deposed Aurelius from his position as chairman of the board—this time for good.

Despite his effective lock on the Ares board, Knight still had other problems to contend with, among them the Chicago situation. As time dragged on, the bugs showed no signs of going away, and the continued defense of the Containment Zone was costing Ares millions of nuyen. Knight also believed that some insect spirits had managed to escape the Containment Zone, defeating the purpose of the quarantine. The Chicago blockade soon became little more than an expensive exercise in public relations, and Knight badly wanted a swift way to end it without appearing to simply abandon Chicago to the bugs. In late 2057 Ares labs provided what looked like the proverbial magic bullet: Strain III-Beta, an astral bacteria that feeds on astrally active entities. In February of 2058, Knight Errant troops entered Chicago with tanker trucks full of Strain III-Beta and the heaviest armament Ares Arms could produce. The troops used the astral-energy-eating bacteria to weaken the insect spirits, then attacked them with conventional weaponry. After less than twelve hours, Ares declared the Containment Zone clean and pulled its troops out of Chicago, leaving a surprised UCAS government to pick up the pieces.

Another potential problem came with the arrival of Arthur Vogel on Ares' board of directors, courtesy of Dunkelzahn's will. Vogel, an ecological activist, successful trial attorney and former presidential candidate, was one of the last people Knight expected to end up in such a position, and he has yet to make up his mind how to deal with the man. While Vogel initially had little voting power within Ares, he was a popular public figure whose opinions carried considerable weight with many people—particularly with certain ecological organizations on the fringe of legality. Vogel also served as president of Sierra, Inc., a mainstream environmentalist group that began to show a harder edge after Vogel took charge. Like any major megacorporation, Ares has been guilty of its share of "environmentally incorrect" practices, and Knight has yet to discern just how much trouble Vogel might give him about those indiscretions. Thus far, however, Vogel has made no bold moves or demands, giving rise to rumors in some eco-activist circles that the dwarf has "sold out" to the corporate establishment he so recently joined.

Double Cross

When Damien Knight first appeared on the scene, Leonard Aurelius wanted nothing more than to regain control of Ares. After losing control of the corporation for the second time, he became obsessed with destroying Damien Knight by any means necessary, even if that meant sacrificing Ares. Knight's control of the Ares board and powerful allies in the UCAS government, however, made Aurelius' revenge seem almost impossible—until 2059, when Aurelius began implementing a plan to sidestep both those factors.

Aurelius had kept a careful eye on Richard Villiers' operations in Boston, and he came to believe that Villiers had the right idea in escaping Fuchi's boardroom battles by starting his own company. Determined to reproduce Villiers' apparent success, Aurelius began looking for smaller corporations to take over privately, hoping to gradually build a rival to Ares. The formal announcement of Novatech's existence in October of 2059 complicated matters for

Aurelius, however, freed from the need to hide his acquisitions Villiers began snapping up prime companies throughout North America, and those not bought by Novatech raised their defenses to remain independent. Aurelius soon realized that slowly building a viable rival to Ares was no longer an option; if he wanted to oppose Knight, he would have to act quickly.

Aurelius found a perfect ally in Dr. Lucien Cross of Cross Applied Technologies. Though a rising star courtesy of its founder's expertise and a rich bequest from Dunkelzahn, CATCo still needed a major influx of cash in order to become a top-tier megacorporation. Aurelius had the funds to make CATCo a contender. Cross also had reason to hate Knight as fiercely as Aurelius did and so was likely to give Aurelius a hearing. To Aurelius' surprise, Cross initially rejected his offer, believing it was some sort of ploy by Knight. The following day, Aurelius sold all of his stock in Ares Macrotechnology, an act that went a long way toward convincing Cross of his sincerity. After an intensive week of backroom meetings, extended surveillance by Seraphim agents, magical mind probes and high-stakes bargaining, Aurelius became a minority partner in CATCo. Cross still held a majority of the stock, but he bought Aurelius' bankroll and his insights into Damien Knight. At about the same time, information ferreted out by the Seraphim enabled Cross to blackmail his way onto the Corporate Court; in April of 2060, after the death of Renraku's Navroz Chandaria, Yves Aquillon of CATCo was chosen as the next Court justice. This achievement made CATCo a true AAA megacorp and brought the number of corporations represented on the Court to an even ten.

Aurelius did not leave Ares quietly, however. His father built the corporation up from nothing, and Aurelius refused to let Knight have it without a fight. Rather than selling his stock on the open market, he sold it privately to the man he believed most likely to make life miserable for Knight—Arthur Vogel. Aurelius' holdings, added to the shares Vogel inherited from Dunkelzahn, gave Vogel a slightly higher percentage of Ares stock than Knight. Knight's control of the Gavilan Ventures shares expired in August of 2059, so Vogel's quiet stock purchase later that year posed a potential threat to Knight's control of the corporation. So far, Vogel has made no attempts to oust Knight from his position as chairman or CEO, but he may change his mind at any time. Should Vogel team up with Daviar and her Gavilan Ventures stock, their combined voting power might make things very difficult for Knight. Keenly aware of this, Knight has been scrambling to prepare a defense in case the two move against him. Ares may appear calm on the surface, but the tensions deep within the corporation may yet erupt in any number of ways.

CROSS APPLIED TECHNOLOGIES HISTORY

Damien Knight's Nanosecond Buyout made some men rich who had never touched the stock market. Among them was Lucien Cross, a young programming genius from Québec. Cross was a computer expert with the "investigative research" division—another name for in-house corporate spies—of Acquisition Technologies. As David Gavilan, Knight had worked with Cross on numerous projects for Acquisition Technologies. The two had a great deal of respect for each other's programming abilities, and when Gavilan/Knight began planning the Nanosecond Buyout, he contacted Cross and invited him in on the deal.

Though Cross approved of the idea behind the Ares buyout, he had no interest in attaching himself to an existing corporation. Instead, he planned to start his own company with the income gained from Knight's operation. Rather than risking any of his own money in the stock manipulations, he preferred payment directly from Knight after the buyout was completed. Cross had seen too many others burned by Knight's trickery, however, and decided to prepare a little insurance in case Knight tried to renege on their agreement. Cross had saved copies of the original records kept by the Acquisition Technologies team that created the code for the buyout—records that clearly demonstrated the involvement of one David Gavilan in the venture and included details of how it was accomplished. Cross also had copies of Gavilan's personnel records from AT, pulled from the company's files. If Knight tried to cheat Cross, Cross intended to make sure that Knight would at least go down with him.

Whether or not Knight originally planned a double-cross, he stuck to his bargain, paying Cross an enormous commission for his assistance in planning and programming the Nanosecond Buyout. Cross, in turn, kept quiet about Knight's history, though he saved his "insurance policy" for a rainy day. The mere fact that he had helped Knight set up the Nanosecond Buyout, however, made him a threat to Knight's operations; as the only individual with precise knowledge of how the feat was accomplished, Lucien Cross was in a unique position to pull something similar on Knight or Ares, should he ever choose to do so. Knight reviewed his options and bided his time, waiting to see what Cross would do before deciding how to deal with him.

After parting company with Knight on polite, if not particularly trusting, terms, Cross began to acquire stock in several carefully chosen high technology companies. He first obtained controlling stock in a group of small, innovative hardware and software developers, merging them under the Cross Matrix Technologies umbrella. Depending on the company's nature, he sometimes took an active role in determining its development priorities; other times, he left the smaller company's original founders alone to their creative work, providing funding without interference. While building this technological empire, Cross also began developing his own team of shadow operatives. He used his contacts from his own days as a corporate spook to track down and recruit the best and brightest to his company, paying handsomely for their expertise. The great dragon Dunkelzahn, also involved in the Nanosecond Buyout, quietly began investing monies in various aspects of Cross Technologies in order to foster the corporation's work; his interest in the corporation and its founder would not become public knowledge, however, until the publication of his last will and testament some years later.

With selected infusions of cash from a great dragon, a highly skilled intelligence division, Québec's favorable tax structure and closed market and his own excellent management skills, Cross's young corporation began to grow quickly. By 2050, Cross Applied Technologies (CATCo) had expanded into cyberware and biomedical research, consumer electronics and entertainment, as well as greatly enlarging the corporation's core business of Matrix

development. The skills of Cross's intelligence operatives, the so-called Seraphim, often enabled CATCo to usurp other companies' cutting-edge research and produce finished products before the original inventors could do so. The Seraphim also provided timely stock market information to assist Cross in hostile takeovers, and were not above doing some manipulation of their own—in stock prices and other areas. Among other things, the Seraphim dug up personal information on more than one influential corporate board member that helped smooth the way for CATCo takeovers and expansions. Though not approaching AAA status, by 2052 CATCo had become a solid third-tier corporation and was moving rapidly toward the second tier. Damien Knight watched these developments with interest and quietly made plans to either co-opt Cross or eliminate him should his corporation grow large enough to threaten Ares' interests.

In 2053, Cross took one of his company's expansions a little too far. With a combination of stock manipulation, subtle threats and a well-timed shadowrun, Cross Biomedical took control of a Buffalo, New York-based company called Bioleve. One of the first companies to produce commercially viable bioware, Bioleve was a significant acquisition for Cross. Through a series of shell companies, however, it belonged to Damien Knight and Ares. Knight, furious at having one of his prize subsidiaries snatched out from under his nose, expressed his displeasure to Lucien Cross in no uncertain terms. Cross apologized, but he clearly had no intention of returning Bioleve to Ares or compensating Knight for its loss. When Cross failed to back down after a series of increasingly blatant threats, Knight decided that Cross had become more trouble than he was worth and hired a freelance assassin to kill him.

The assassination attempt nearly succeeded; only the willingness of Cross's Seraphim bodyguards to take a bullet for him saved him from death. Within minutes of the attack, Damien Knight received his second unpleasant surprise: a brief, coldly worded message from Dunkelzahn, telling him to leave Cross alone or face the consequences. Cross's own threat to expose Knight's true identity, following on the heels of the dragon's pronouncement, came as something of an anticlimax. Unwilling to make an implacable enemy of the powerful and wealthy great dragon, Knight backed down.

For the next few years, the rivalry between Knight and Cross expressed itself through increasingly brutal business competition. Cross took particular delight in stealing or destroying Ares research and set more than half of his Seraphim worldwide to work on Ares-related projects. Though grossly inferior to Ares in size and manpower, Cross made up for these disadvantages by manipulating Québec's draconian anti-competition laws to the hilt. He also placed several members of the Seraphim throughout the Québec government, turning the already slow and expensive process of legal competition with CATCo into a red-tape nightmare. Ares also found it more difficult than expected to make inroads into illegal markets because the Seraphim, though fewer in number than Ares operatives, proved just as effective.

With Dunkelzahn's death, the Seraphim once again found themselves protecting their boss against Damien Knight's assassination attempts. Since August of 2057, Cross has survived three different near-fatal accidents; though none left evidence strong enough to bring to law-enforcement authorities, Cross believes that Knight engineered them. Determined to win out over his onetime colleague, Cross has beefed up his own security and is intensifying shadow operations against Ares holdings wherever he can reach them.

THE PLAYERS

This section describes the corporations and the major non-player characters who play a part in the Ares track of the **Blood in the Boardroom** story line, outlining their roles, motivations and plans. The gamemaster can use these characters in the adventures provided in this section or as background material for other shadowruns involving the world of the megacorps.

ARES MACROTECHNOLOGY

President/CEO: Damien Knight
Headquarters: Detroit, Michigan, UCAS

Business Profile:

The largest corporation in the UCAS, and the only North American AAA megacorp until Novatech's sudden rise to power, Ares Macrotechnology prides itself on its reputation as a defender of the general public and has spent a great deal of effort (and money) promoting that image. The corp's assistance in putting down the riots after Dunkelzahn's assassination improved Ares' reputation, and its apparent clearing of insect spirits from Chicago seems to have done the same—at least for those living outside the former Chicago Containment Zone.

In addition to its best-known divisions—Ares Arms, AresSpace and Knight Errant—Ares supports a diverse range of business interests typical of a large megacorporation. Areas in which Ares has significant investments include entertainment, computer hardware and software, communications systems and a growing magical research division.

Damien Knight

Possibly the most powerful man in North America, and certainly one of the most dangerous to oppose, Damien Knight inspires respect in his enemies and fear in his friends. Knight is inarguably brilliant—he frequently played chess with Dunkelzahn and sometimes won—but owes his position to his utter ruthlessness as much as to his native cunning and mastery of mind games. Knight will seize any advantage and use every angle, and believes wholeheartedly in kicking a man when he's down. Despite his current difficulties within Ares, Knight has supreme confidence in his ability to keep firm control over his corporation. Dragons, scheming colleagues and the deadliest computer virus ever known have not been able to stop him—why should he fear anyone or anything else?

Arthur Vogel

Two years ago, Arthur Vogel was an ecological lawyer and an also-ran presidential candidate. Today, he's the majority shareholder of one of the largest corporations in the world and a board mem-

ber of Sierra, Inc., one of the oldest and largest pro-environment groups. Question marks surround Vogel at this stage of his career — is he still an environmental activist, or has he sold out? Will he try to reverse Ares Macrotechnology's history of environmental damage, or has his newfound position as a board member changed his mind? And just where did he find the few billion nuyen with which he bought Leonard Aurelius's stock in Ares? Vogel isn't answering any of these questions, but he is asking a lot of his own. Now that he wields more clout on the Ares board, he's been carefully examining all major proposals for their environmental impact, but has yet to take any bolder action. His supporters say he is simply being cautious, making sure he has all his ducks in a row before taking on the formidable Damien Knight in anything like an open conflict. His detractors see this go-slow approach as an excuse to do nothing while his bank account grows courtesy of business as usual at Ares Macrotech. Relations between Knight and Vogel appear neutral for the moment, with Vogel clearly wary of crossing Knight and Knight unsure what to make of "this greenhead dwarf lawyer I've been saddled with." By all accounts, however, the two men work together as well as anyone else on the Ares board. If Vogel intends to make trouble for Knight, as Leonard Aurelius clearly hoped he would, he is keeping any such plans heavily under wraps.

Karen King

The supervising vice president of Ares Seattle, King earned her position by impressing Damien Knight in the only way that mattered—by ruthlessly crushing everyone who stood in her way. A young-looking fifty, King has headed up Ares Seattle for more than ten years and is looking for an opportunity to move up the corporate ladder. Knight has great confidence in her and rarely visits Seattle to check on her work; unfortunately for her, this also means King has fewer chances than other Ares execs to impress Knight directly. She has begun to take more chances with her local operations, hoping that one of her successful gambles will catch Knight's eye. Her particular focus at the moment is on Cross Advanced Electronics, a Seattle-based division of CATCo. She expected to quickly overcome CAE, until just recently led by the dangerously inexperienced Bernard Cross. However, CAE somehow held its own, and now that the corp is once again under firm leadership, the stakes are growing higher as the conflict between the two companies heats up. If Knight notices the campaign against CAE and finds it unnecessarily costly, King might well lose her job. Knowing this, she is seeking an opening to secure victory before the situation gets out of hand.

CROSS APPLIED TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

President/CEO: Dr. Lucien Cross
Headquarters: Montreal, Québec

Business Profile:

The largest corporation in Québec, CATCo is often held up by the Québecois government as proof that their stringent anti-competition laws work for the good of the country. The fact that most of the corp's facilities are outside of Québec, and that no other corporation has come close to CATCo's success, appears not to affect this opinion. Québec's policies have certainly worked to

CATCo's advantage, particularly in protecting the corporation from competition with rivals such as Ares. Stiff tariffs on imported computer products give Cross Matrix Technologies a huge market advantage in Québec. Unlike many of its local competitors, however, CATCo has not taken advantage of this captive audience by releasing shoddy products. As a result, CATCo software has become increasingly popular worldwide.

Medical products and services, cyberware, bioware, electronics, consumer goods and entertainment media are some of the other fields in which CATCo has established divisions. Most branches of CATCo concentrate more on research than production, preferring to license their designs to the highest bidder and watch the royalties roll in. With the added funding provided by Leonard Aurelius's arrival, CATCo expects to be expanding even further in the near future.

Lucien Cross, Ph.D.

Lucien Cross shows no signs of slowing down as he approaches his seventieth birthday. A skilled programmer and system designer, he still personally oversees the operations of Cross Matrix Technologies. He holds weekly teleconferences with his division heads and visits every major CATCo facility at least once per quarter. Polite to a fault, he drives a hard bargain without ever raising his voice, and he never forgets a favor—or a grudge. He usually works at least ten hours a day and gives his best to his employees and his company. His employees call him "Old Stone-Face," but have the utmost respect for him—not least because of his formidable ability to twist every nuance of Québec law to CATCo's advantage.

Leonard Aurelius

Leonard Aurelius lived most of his life in the shadow of his famous and domineering father, Nicholas. Though the elder Aurelius died less than a year after retiring, his shadow seemed to hover over everything Leonard did at Ares. Worried about losing what his father had worked so hard to gain, Aurelius proved to be a conservative leader, though an intelligent one. Damien Knight's partial takeover of Ares was a huge blow to Aurelius personally; he felt as though he had failed his father, and spent years trying to regain control of Ares because he knew Nicholas would have wanted it that way. After an explosive argument with his youngest daughter, however, Leonard realized how completely his father's legacy had controlled his course; he became determined to live his own life and leave his father's ghost behind. Moving from Ares to CATCo has endowed him with a gratifying sense of freedom, and he seems more willing to take chances now. He still harbors hopes of reclaiming Ares one day, but only on his own terms; if destroying Damien Knight means giving up that hope, he is willing to do so.

Bernard Cross

Until recently, Lucien Cross's nephew Bernard headed up Seattle-based Cross Advanced Electronics. In 2056, he misread a takeover ploy by Mitsuhama and almost lost the entire division; only the arrival of a few of the elite Seraphim agents, who resolved the situation in a direct (and bloody) manner, saved Bernard's bacon and his job. Never particularly decisive to begin with, Bernard was terrified by his mistake, which nearly got him killed as well as costing CATCo dearly. He became so fearful of making another error that any decision weightier than "Roquefort or Brie?" was beyond him. Though technically remaining in charge of his division, Bernard relied on his uncle's Seraphim agents for most of the daily decisions required to keep the company on course. The Cross family name seems to have been the most important factor keeping him employed; evidence of his utter incompetence soon became so egregious that he was recalled to Montreal in 2061.

Jezebel Surrateau

The leader of the Seattle branch of the Seraphim, Surrateau is a physical adept and also served as the real head of Cross Advanced Electronics until Bernard Cross's recall and the arrival of Raymond Briggs (see **Double Crossover,** p. 611). She began her career as one of Lucien Cross's hand-picked agents, specializing in investigation, physical intrusion and theft; various rumors also tagged her as Cross's mistress. Surrateau was with Cross when Knight's assassin attacked in 2053, and she took a bullet in her spine to save her employer. Though paralyzed from the waist down, she refused invasive surgery or cyberware to remove the bullet and has spent the past eight years in a high-tech wheelchair.

Aware that Surrateau's tactical brilliance equaled her lost physical gifts, Lucien Cross sent her to Seattle when his nephew Bernard began to get in over his head. Her take-charge attitude put her firmly in control of Cross Advanced Electronics and kept Karen King of Ares Seattle from gaining much ground on CAE. Few people outside CAE know who she is, and while running the division she often handled "Ms. Johnson" duties when deniable shadow assets were necessary. Surrateau is at least a Grade 2 initiate and has been working hard to learn new adept abilities that her paralysis will not hinder.

Her latest coup enabled the Seraphim to take over a portion of Dunkelzahn's formidable shadow network—a web of contacts, fixers, runners and spies so secretive that even many of its own members had no idea they were working for a dragon. Surrateau's dealings with one such member, a runner named Hawke who turned against his former employer over the death of a friend, brought part of the Seattle-area network under the control of the Seraphim.

SIERRA, INC.

President: Gary Grey
Headquarters: Sacramento, California Free State

Organizational Profile:

With its origins stretching well back into the twentieth century, Sierra is one of the oldest and—until recently—most mainstream environmental organizations. It promotes its policies primarily through petitions, lawsuits, peaceful resistance and low-pressure fundraising, which gives the group a much larger membership base than any other environmental organization. More radical eco groups often accuse Sierra of being a corporate front that primarily helps its members feel "environmentally correct" without actually doing anything to help save the Earth. Some people voiced these suspicions more loudly after Dunkelzahn's death, when Arthur

Vogel became the president of Sierra and a member of Ares Macrotechnology's board of directors within the space of a year.

Possibly in response to the rumors, Vogel began moving the organization toward a more militant pro-environment posture, though still far short of the "eco-tage" tactics practiced by groups like Green War. Membership figures remained about the same during Vogel's two-year tenure at Sierra, but the group's activities began to include more public protests and fewer letter-writing campaigns. Gary Grey, Vogel's former running mate, took over as Sierra's president shortly after Vogel became a majority shareholder in Ares; the direction in which he will lead Sierra remains to be seen. Vogel still holds his seat on Sierra's board of directors, which leads many members to wonder just how fiercely Sierra will pursue the megacorps.

ADVENTURE FRAMEWORKS

This section presents several adventures in an outline format for the gamemaster to develop and use. All of the frameworks draw upon the background material and major characters described in this track.

DOUBLE CROSSOVER

Premise

Raymond Briggs is the vice president of Ares Seattle's Consumer Electronics division. His father, William Briggs, is the executive VP of Ares Global Entertainment—and is about to follow his old friend Leonard Aurelius to Cross Applied Technologies. William wants his son out of Ares to avoid reprisals for his own departure, and Lucien Cross wants a good manager to replace his nephew Bernard at Cross Advanced Electronics. William can't risk telling his son about his own defection because Knight's people might get wind of it. His only choice is to have his son extracted from Ares Seattle at the same time that he leaves Ares Detroit.

Setup

Jezebel Surrateau hires the runners to extract Raymond Briggs from Ares. Raymond works on the top floor of Ares' Bellevue offices and lives just a few miles away in an Ares-owned neighborhood in the exclusive Beaux Arts district. A high-speed monorail connects the executive residences with the office building, and security is very tight on both ends. However, Surrateau (through William Briggs) can provide the runners with several back doors into the Matrix systems of the office building and the monorail control center. The pay is high, as befits the extraction of a high-ranking executive. The run must be completed within a week, and Raymond Briggs must not be injured during the extraction. Surrateau also insists that one of her people, an Amerindian samurai named Goliath, go along on the run. Goliath is a Seraphim operative, there to keep Raymond safe and to make sure that events in Seattle and Detroit occur more or less in sync.

Event 1

The extraction is difficult, but not impossible. Security at Ares headquarters is understandably tight and includes some of Knight Errant's best men, but the back doors provided by Briggs Sr. prove extremely helpful. Surrateau has scheduled another operation against an Ares facility around the same time as the extraction, which should help distract building security. Raymond Briggs is young and fit by management standards and spent some years on Ares' competitive tae kwon do team; he will fight the extraction fairly well for a civilian, but the runners should manage to subdue or tranquilize him and get him out safely.

Event 2

Some time during the escape, or when the runners reach their safe house, Raymond unobtrusively breaks his Platinum DocWagon wristband, quietly summoning a DocWagon High Threat Response team to his aid. Tracking Raymond by the locator in the wristband, the DocWagon team assumes the worst in a "band rupture alert" situation and arrives loaded for bear. If they discover that Raymond is being held hostage, they will immediately alert Lone Star. While the Star might not be terribly anxious to come to the aid of an Ares employee, Ares will receive word of the incident from DocWagon and will dispatch a Knight Errant team to retrieve Raymond. The runners must ditch the DocWagon tracer bracelet and make good their escape.

Event 3

The runners bring Raymond to Surrateau, who immediately puts a telecom call through to his father so that the elder Briggs can let his son know what's going on. Raymond has a surprise for his father; he has been married for six months and his wife is still at their house in Beaux Arts. Raymond didn't tell his father about the marriage because his wife is an ork and he knew his father wouldn't approve. Leaving father and son to sort out their differences, Serrateau hires the runners to break into the Ares housing complex and recover Mrs. Briggs. Raymond insists on coming along because he has the keys, passcodes and knowledge of the area, and Goliath accompanies Raymond as his personal bodyguard. When the team arrives, Ares security is getting ready to move Mrs. Briggs to a secure area for her protection (and to see what she knows about her husband's possible defection). The runners must move fast and keep Raymond from doing something stupid to save his wife.

Climax

The runners have barely finished dealing with the Ares security goons when another security team shows up—this one from Novatech, Inc. Now on the lookout for a few good men and women, Villiers has his operatives working overtime to tag potential employees he might acquire from other companies. Novatech mobilized its forces as soon as it became aware of Cross's extraction attempt on Raymond, recognizing a golden opportunity to snatch the prize with minimal effort. The runners must choose whether to fight the Novatech team or allow Raymond to go with them. If they choose the latter option, they will only receive a portion of the agreed-upon fee, because getting Raymond out of Ares is only half the job. If they fight, they stand to make a friend of one corp and an enemy of the other no matter which way the battle goes.

Sequels

If the runners defeat the Novatech team and deliver Raymond to Cross Applied Technologies, they will greatly improve their reputations with CATCo. Serrateau always needs competent third parties and will be happy to give the runners more work if they continue to do well. If they lose the fight or don't fight at all, CATCo regards them as incompetents and spreads the word of their failure on the streets. Allowing the Novatech team to leave unmolested earns them some favor from Richard Villiers, however, who may offer them some small-scale "test runs" to see if their choice was prompted by good sense or simple cowardice. If the runners subsequently strike him as an intelligent and capable bunch, Novarech may throw them more work in the future

Several weeks after the adventure, Bernard Cross is "promoted" to senior VP of Cross Matrix Technologies and transferred back to Montreal, where he will work directly under the watchful eye of his uncle Lucien. Meanwhile, Raymond Briggs becomes the new head of Cross Advanced Electronics (where he ends up regardless of the runners' decision) and his father becomes a special consultant to Cross Entertainment and Multimedia, bringing a number of profitable contracts along with him. Jezebel Surrateau stays on in Seattle. With Raymond Briggs' firm hand on CAE's wheel, she can worry about the espionage side of things and leave corporate management to Raymond

NOT IN MY BACK YARD

Premise

As the only Matrix-technology corp in Québec, Cross Applied Technologies has never had to worry about competition on its own turf. Damien Knight wants to change that and has set in motion a plan to take advantage of Québec's Empowerment Zones and open-arms-to-corps policy. Quick Trigger Systems, a Detroit-based IC-software development company secretly controlled by Knight through several hidden channels, has petitioned Québec to relocate its headquarters there. The Québec national government has already approved the move; the Québec City Council will make the final decision. Mayor Guevrement, eager to encourage a stronger corporate presence in her city, supports the plan despite protests from Cross. The city's seven aldermen also support QTS; they see the promotion of competition in Québec's business environment as a positive development.

With only two weeks to go before the vote, Lucien Cross has instructed his Seraphim to take a closer look at QTS. The data they acquire through the Matrix is unproductive, however, because they fail to defeat QTS's intrusion countermeasures and sophisticated disappearing SAN configuration. In order to come up with anything valuable, they are forced to make a physical run on QTS's Detroit HQ.

Setup

Anticipating this action by Cross but unwilling to tip his hand by wheeling out Knight Errant or other security assets, Damien Knight turns to the shadows for extra protection for his corp. A fixer approaches the runners, seeking to hire them as additional security for QTS in Detroit for a two-week period. They are given a tour of the site's defenses, equipped and ordered to be on duty during nighttime hours and on call during the day. Security measures at the facility include a ten-meter fence, low-light-equipped video cameras, card and voiceprint maglocks and laser-trip beams in certain areas. One easy week rolls by without any trouble ... but of course, the calm does not last

Event 1

The Seraphim agents hit the facility early in the second week, with well-planned distractions and multiple teams. First, four Seraphim agents, already dressed in Knight Errant uniforms, commandeer a Knight Errant vehicle. They then stage a short but noisy fake pursuit of a GMC 4201 heavy semi carrying a group of Cutters gang members, hired to cause chaos. The truck also is carrying a hefty chunk of plastic explosives. The "chase" ends when the Cutters ram their truck through QTS's front gate, careen into the lot and smash into the main building. The Cutters immediately scatter, shooting anything that moves and wreaking as much havoc as possible. The Seraphim follow them in, quickly order QTS security to chase the Cutters down and pretend to pursue gang members inside. Then the truck explodes. As soon as they are in, the Seraphim make for a jackpoint and their decker gets to work. Hovering nearby is a helicopter with a Seraphim mage on astral overwatch and a rigger, who is also piloting a pair of sniper drones to give the other agents fire support. As the Seraphim inside finish their job and are lifted out, real Knight Errant troops and DocWagon vehicles start showing up, creating confusion that the Seraphim use to escape.

The Seraphim with the data should get away, as they are all extremely skilled agents. However, the runners should manage to capture some of the Cutters.

Event 2

The results of the run do not make Damien Knight happy. Someone has managed to obtain internal QTS records that, if properly evaluated, may connect QTS with him. He has no proof, but he suspects that Cross is behind it. Through their fixer, he orders the runners to track down whoever pulled the job and destroy the data.

If the runners interrogate any Cutters they take prisoner, they get the street name of the Seraphim agent who hired the gangers. Hitting the streets and working their contacts for several days, they eventually find that their man is preparing to leave town for Québec soon. The Seraphim have discovered that the runners are on their trail, however, and set up an ambush for them. As the runners close in, the Seraphim get up close and personal.

Assuming the runners survive, if they interrogate any captive Seraphim or get a look at an agent's pocket secretary, they discover that Cross has made some interesting discoveries concerning QTS. The Seraphim are planning to take the stolen data to Québec City's chief of police, Sebastien Hull, who sits on the City Council. Though Hull cannot vote, he has significant influence over the aldermen, who almost always vote as he wishes. He is also a staunch supporter of Cross; if he knew Knight controlled QTS, he could easily sway the vote against Knight's company.

Climax

With only a day to go before the vote, Knight must take drastic action to pull off his plan. Stopping Cross from informing Chief Hull is virtually impossible this late in the game, but Hull also does not have enough time to do any campaigning among the aldermen before the meeting. If Knight can keep Chief Hull from speaking at the meeting, or at least delay his arrival until after the vote (scheduled for 10:15 a.m.), Knight is in the clear. Once again, he sends the runners out with an objective: stop Hull from arriving at the council meeting before 11 a.m., by any means necessary. Knight will make arrangements to get the runners over the border and supplied with gear as necessary. After that, it's up to them.

As chief of police, Sebastien Hull is not the easiest man in the world to stop. He rides in a well-armored and armed Rolls Royce Phaeton limousine, driven by a combat rigger. He has four personal bodyguards: two trolls, a physical adept and a mage. His limo is routinely escorted by four gendarmes, and they travel using all the bells and whistles—they don't stop for traffic lights.

The runners decide on the approach they wish to take. They may opt to distract and delay, or they may try to cack Hull. Crafty runners may come up with interesting options, such as kidnapping Hull's wife and holding her hostage, manufacturing an incident that draws massive police protection and requires the chief's personal attention and so on.

Sequels

Even if QTS is allowed into the Québec Empowerment Zone, Cross is now wise to the company's ownership and the Seraphim will be all over it. Knight will not hesitate to use the corp's position to his advantage, dragging out all the dirty tricks and making life for Cross Technologies unpleasant at best. QTS has also begun negotiating with the Québec government to provide Matrix security, a contract certain to slot off Cross and start a nasty competition. All this, of course, means more biz for the runners.

If the QTS bid to move to Québec gets voted down, the runners will have failed a very powerful man. They'll be blacklisted in Detroit and other towns where Ares carries a lot of weight.

After they make their move on Hull, the runners might face a difficult time in Québec. If they kill him, every cop in the nation will likely be looking for their ugly mugs, and they won't treat cop-killing scum like the runners in a friendly fashion.

KNIGHT'S GAMBIT

Premise

In his will, the great dragon Dunkelzahn left his antique chess set, with the exception of the black king piece, to one of his favorite opponents, Damien Knight. The king was bequeathed to Leonard Aurelius. During Aurelius's rapid departure from Ares, his personal secretary failed to retrieve the piece from its hiding place in a secret wall safe—inside Aurelius's old office in Knight Plaza, Ares corporate headquarters. Aurelius sends some shadowrunners to retrieve it, and Knight hires the players' team to find the team sent by Aurelius and intercept the king piece. Then the piece goes missing, and everyone blames the runners.

Setup

The runners are hired by a fixer connected to Ares. He explains that some shadowrunners recently broke into Aurelius's old office in Knight Plaza and stole something from a secret safe. Ares wants the theft investigated, but as Aurelius is no longer their man, it prefers to keep out of the picture and use deniable assets—the runners—instead of the corp's own forces. The fixer hypothesizes that the thieves may be working for Aurelius and may have retrieved something he left behind.

The fixer gives the runners general descriptions of the other runner team, as well as a few blurry video shots taken from security cameras. He also can provide some magically preserved blood samples for ritual sorcery, left behind by one of the runners after an Ares security guard shot him. If the player characters have butted heads with a particular rival team in the past, this may be an ideal time to renew the rivalry. If not, the gamemaster should create a runner team roughly equal in power to the players' team.

Event 1

Whether through legwork or ritual sorcery, the runners should track the opposing team to the large estate of Leonard Aurelius, where they are holed up until Aurelius returns from an out-of-town business trip. The opposing runners handed over the king piece to Aurelius's staff, who placed it with his chess set in his private study. The only other person at home is Aurelius's rebellious daughter Evelynn, also known as "Eve Night," lead guitarist for a local band named the Unholy Machine. She's taking advantage of her dad's absence to fool around in the mansion with her boyfriend, Two-Chord Teddy, who plays for the Detroit Nightmares urban brawl team.

Event 2

If the player characters raid the Aurelius estate, they will be up against the other runner team, a squad of Eagle Security guards contracted to protect the estate and some expensive but nonlethal home security. If the runners contact their fixer before going in, he instructs them to look for and seize the king piece. If the runners get inside the mansion and interrogate the other runners or the staff, one of them will reveal the location of the piece. However, when the runners reach the study, the piece is no longer there. Though they don't know it yet, Eve stole the piece to slot off her father.

If questioned during the raid, both Eve and Teddy will deny any knowledge of the king piece, but Eve is lying. She stuck the piece in Teddy's coat and will attempt to flee with him.

Event 3

Understandably, the player characters will not look forward to reporting their failure to the fixer. Stressing the importance of the king piece, the fixer will "suggest" that the runners do everything they can to find it.

Aurelius returns home after the runners' raid and discovers that the chess piece is missing. Blaming the player characters, he hires every goon he can think of to track them down and retrieve the piece. Word hits the streets that Aurelius wants the runners, and the rumor immediately makes it over to Ares. Knight, hearing that Aurelius has it in for the runners, assumes that the runners lied about failing to get the piece and that they have double-crossed him. Word once again hits the streets that the runners are wanted, this time with even more nuyen backing the request. Suddenly a lot of their contacts don't want to be seen in public with them. The runners may need to get the cold shoulder more than once before they realize the drek they're in. Then they get a call from their fixer, who wants them to come in for a meet. They should definitely get the impression that they're in trouble whether they go or not.

Climax

Eve figures it would really yank her dad's chain if she started getting chummy with Damien Knight. She wants to challenge him to a chess game and figures he can't say no if she has the king piece. Unfortunately, she never learned how to play—so she starts a crash course, bugging people to play all the time.

The runners, now hunted by both sides, have little time to figure out the real story. If they're clueless, drop a few hints in their laps. Perhaps they see Two-Chord Teddy on a trid show right before an urban brawl game where he talks about taking up chess as a new hobby. Or maybe they hear a rumor that Eve Night has gotten herself a date with Damien Knight. Eventually something should steer them in her direction, but not before they have at least one run-in with goons who've tracked them down.

When they find Eve, she is in the back of a hipster cafe getting chess lessons from an old squatter. When confronted, she admits that she has the king but refuses to surrender it. She wants to use it to play with Knight, and she will only listen to or deal with the runners if they agree to help her set up a game. If the runners assault her or try to take the piece by force, a dozen or Teddy's urban brawl friends jump in to defend her.

If asked, Knight will agree to a game with Eve and arrange a secure place for it. The runners will be asked to escort her to the meet. Aurelius' runner team will tail them to the site, with orders to crash the party and steal the piece back.

Sequels

Eve's infatuation with Knight is little more than a ploy to use against her father. Knight is handsome and all, but too arrogant and straitlaced for her. She's also not stupid and doesn't bring the real king piece to the game with Knight; instead, she brings a copy she had made. The fraud will be easily detectable under close examination, but probably not in the middle of a firefight or a tense scene. Whether or not she returns the real one to her father, however, remains to be seen.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

This section provides additional short adventure ideas involving Ares and other players involved in the corp's affairs. The gamemaster can flesh out these ideas as short or full-fledged adventures using the material in this book.

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP

Before Leonard Aurelius bails out from Ares, he wants to loot the piggy bank. Specifically, he wants to take with him a pet research project on crystal growing and fiber-optic development which would fit right into a corporation like Cross Applied Technologies and make his offer to buy into that corp more appealing. This research project is being conducted in such an unusual location that he requires shadowrunners to retrieve the relevant data for him—Ares' *Daedalus* orbital platform.

The inside connections provided by Aurelius are the only things that make a run like this remotely possible. He offers the team a huge payment, can easily get them aboard the orbital and can pull many strings to bail them out of a bad situation when they get back to Earth.

Aurelius gets the team aboard *Daedalus* by supplying them with Ares corporate IDs and a cover story as a repair crew. He books them on a shuttle up and has a trusted adviser prep them beforehand on corp etiquette, zero-g maneuvering and other space survival skills. Because of the strict security and nature of the mission, the runners will be unable to bring weapons or unusual gear. In addition, as magic cannot be used in space, the runners will have to rely on their skills and wits alone. They will have access to mechanical and electronics kits and tools, but they must contend with a hostile environment, well-trained and armed guards, a rigged security system and limited escape options.

The mission itself is relatively straightforward. The runners are to maintain their cover as repair technicians for as long as it is useful. They have a limited time frame in which to operate, because their ride back down the gravity well (via a rigger shuttle pilot also working for Aurelius) is scheduled to depart twenty-four hours after they arrive. Their objective is to break into the crystal and fiber-optics lab and steal the lab's computer memory storage unit (which contains more than fifty years' worth of data) and the project's latest results.

Unexpectedly, the repairs the runners are allegedly there to perform actually need to be taken care of shortly after they arrive, and the work must be done on the platform's sophisticated communications array via space walk. The runners must either quickly think their way out of doing the repairs or else do a real good job of faking it. If they go through with making the repairs, they have an ideal opportunity to severely damage the platform's communication abilities, possibly aiding their subsequent escape.

The main obstacles standing in their way will be the security rigger, retinal-scanning maglocks and Ares personnel. Security guards are equipped with tasers and stun batons only, because no firearms may be used onboard the space platform. If the runners set off an alarm, the station will go on lockdown and no flights will be allowed to leave until a specially trained AresSpace Crisis Response Team arrives.

The trip down will be much rougher than the ride up. Ares prefers not to shoot down one of its own shuttles, but will instead try to force it to land and then capture the passengers.

RETURN POLICY

Reactive Meditech, a third-tier biotech corp, has been targeted for takeover by Cross. During the early stages of the prolonged takeover battle, one of RM's more desperate strategies included the issuance of a flood of short-term bearer bonds in order to raise capital quickly. As the contest for control continued long past when Reactive Meditech expected it to end, the maturity of those bonds has become a guillotine stroke looming on the horizon for the company, which is near financial ruin. Jeff Hansen, RM's security director, recently discovered that an uncomfortably large percentage of those bonds were bought by one person, whose identity remains a mystery. Hansen's investigations have turned up the location of the bearer bonds, however, and he feels he can save his corp from significant fiscal damage if he can steal them.

Hansen hires the runners to accomplish this task, which translates roughly into robbing a bank. An actual old-fashioned, physical bank robbery is not a common event in the electronically

funded 2050s, but banks still keep safe-deposit boxes and vaults for various valuables. This particular job involves hitting the safe-deposit boxes of a well-protected downtown bank, in any manner the runners choose. Hansen encourages the runners to steal whatever they want for themselves as well as getting the bonds for him, as additional thefts will obscure the fact that the bonds were the primary target.

Unfortunately for the runners, the owner of the bonds is none other than Lucien Cross himself, and his Seraphim get a lead on the runners after the heist. Cross had hoped to use the bonds to squeeze RM financially and finally get control over the corporation. He will not be pleased to see his plans foiled.

PLAGUE OF ANGELS

A faction of Alamos 20K, the racist terrorist group, wants to obtain samples of Strain III-Beta, the astrally active parasitic bacteria used against the insect spirits in Chicago. Specifically, they want to steal a large number of devil rats that have become carriers of the bacteria from a secret Ares thaumaturgical lab in Seattle. The Alamos leaders plan on using some of the rats to spread Strain II through areas of Seattle populated by large numbers of ghouls, metahuman mages and others they consider "undesirable."

A leader of the Alamos crew hires the runners to "liberate" the rats. He portrays himself as a supporter of the Awakened Liberation Front (ALF) who can't stand to see poor innocent crea-

tures like devil rats being experimented upon and abused by an inhumane corp like Ares. He will offer a tempting amount of nuyen and play on the runners' compassion, if they display any. He will, of course, leave out any mention of Strain-III. He expects them to figure it out, however, and so arranges for an ambush at the exchange meeting after the run. If the ambush fails and he is captured, he will change his story, claiming to be a Seraphim agent for Cross Applied Technologies. If the runners are still holding the rats, he will offer to buy them on the spot for an increased value and call it even.

Later, as Alamos' plan starts producing results, there are Strain III outbreaks throughout the city. Many different parties are scratching around for the source of the infestation, and Ares comes looking for the runners. The corp wants to contain the outbreaks, seeking to avoid more bad publicity. The Ares reps will lean hard on the runners, who may try contacting the Seraphim. If the real Seraphim get dragged into the stew, they will play both sides, hoping to frag with everyone involved. When the runners finally figure out the true source of their troubles and find the Alamos hide-out, the terrorists go all out to defend it, even using water contaminated with Strain-III against the runner team's mages.

GREEN PIECE

Leviathan Technical, a Silicon Valley corp owned by Ares, recently started a new division dedicated to churning out cyberware products such as headware and skillwires. The corp is also producing a significant amount of toxic and biomedical waste in its labs, which it has disposed of in an irresponsible fashion that has made a number of local eco-activists furious. These activists, many of them from Terra First!, have compiled enough data to indicate that Leviathan is probably behind the dumping, but not enough to concretely connect the corp to the ecological nightmare. They have petitioned Arthur Vogel for help, but so far Damien Knight has managed to block the dwarf's investigations.

At the same time, the Nakatomi faction of Fuchi wants to weaken Ares' strangle hold on the Silicon Valley corps. To facilitate this, a Fuchi decker hacked his way into the Leviathan Matrix host and made off with some interesting data. Hoping to use it as leverage, they leaked some of the data to Terra First! and are negotiating with them to take action against Leviathan/Ares. Terra First! kept Vogel out of this deal, fearing that he has sold out to Ares. Unfortunately for the Fuchi decker, his deck picked up a data worm in the Leviathan system. The data worm sat in his deck, monitoring and logging his activities, which it recently reported back to Ares. Ares dispatches a squad to kill the decker and retrieve the data or destroy it.

Hearing of this development, Vogel hires the runners to reach the decker first. He's lost contact with the Terra First!ers and doesn't realize they are meeting with the decker and Fuchi agents soon to obtain the data. The Ares team will take a few days to track down the Fuchi decker, which gives the runners just enough time to get there first. Vogel doesn't really care what happens to the Fuchi men as long as he gets the data. He doesn't want the runners to mess with the eco-activists, however; in fact, he is hoping to patch things up with them and get down to greenmailing Ares.

The Terra First!ers will not be friendly toward the runners, notwithstanding the fact that Vogel sent them.

If Ares gets to the data or destroys it first, the Terra First!ers are still planning a sabotage run against Leviathan. If Vogel hears of it, he may order the runners to help them, as the run will put pressure on Ares that he can exploit from within.

VIRTUAL FUNDS

Quite a few people would love to know exactly where Arthur Vogel acquired the nuyen to buy Leonard Aurelius's shares in Ares. Richard Villiers, wary of other financial sharks like himself and hoping to dig up some bones with which to beat Ares, has taken a keen enough interest to do some substantial investigation. Through intermediaries, he hires the runners and places them at the beginning of the money trail.

The Matrix money trail begins with a set of randomly timed transfers of funds into one of Vogel's less-than-public accounts from a number of anonymous accounts all over the world. The clues suggest that the money may all be coming from one source, but through a teleporting SAN. In order to find and break into the SAN, the runners must determine its algorithmic code. This leads to the next step, a physical run on Vogel's private office at Sierra, Inc., in Sacramento. This run will net the runners the code, allowing them to access the teleporting SAN. First, however, they must get some of Vogel's friends off their backs.

When they finally access the SAN, it turns out to be a virtual bank on a very tough host patrolled by deckers. The team decker should learn the bank's physical location, however—Santa Fe, Pueblo Corporate Council.

With Vogel's men on their tails, the runners hit Santa Fe and find a nasty welcoming party. A Pueblo Security Force team arrests the runners as soon as they enter the country for espionage, treason and violating Corporate Council secrets. If the runners can't break out on their own, Villiers sends some agents to liberate them, or at least find out what they know. Once out, the runners may check the physical address of the virtual bank, only to discover that it corresponds to a small office building recently gutted in a fire. The PSF will be all over anyone who investigates the site too closely, and all Matrix records will have been adjusted to show the site as Santa Fe city property, empty for ten years and waiting to be demolished. At this point Villiers has learned what he wanted to know and pays off the runners.

TRACK FOUR: OUT OF THE EAST

ON LOCATION

• Welcome to the MegaWatch SIG, your source for all the news on the Big Eight megacorps--official and otherwise. Speak freely, but play nice!
• The Mgr

• Ha: all. Grabbed this interesting tidbit off the newsfeed and thought I'd toss it out for comments. I've edited it down to a reasonable length for the attention-span deficient among us.
• Kaptain Krude

Yamatetsu Corporation Announces
Relocation of Corporate Headquarters
Kyoto, Japan—In an unexpected reaction to mounting financial pressures, Kyoto's Yamatetsu Corporation today announced plans to relocate their corporate headquarters and primary business offices to Vladivostok, Russia.

Since the February 22 death of Yamatetsu's former chairman Tadamako Shibanokuji after a prolonged hospital stay, the future of the megacorporate giant has been in doubt. Shibanokuji's son Yuri took over as chairman, but it was widely believed that the board of directors had little confidence in his ability to manage Yamatetsu successfully.

• Translation: he's an ork, and since everybody in Japan knows that us orks are nasty, brutish and dumb, the board couldn't decide whether to make him into a puppet or just geek him outright.
• Fang

Compounding the situation was a series of regulatory violations discovered at numerous Yamatetsu facilities by government investigators. Substantial fines and economic sanctions were levied against Yamatetsu for these incidents, casting further doubt on Shibanokuji's ability to lead the corporation.

• Translation: the Ministry of Trade in Tokyo just about blew a seal when an ork took over one of Japan's larges' corps, so they started harassing the corp by enforcing every stinky-stink environmental regulation on the books. They figured if they put enough pressure on the board, Yamatetsu would hide the nasty frog under a rock somewhere so the rest of Japan wouldn't get the idea that a kawaruhito was actually fit to run a megacorp.
• Fang

• Not everything is about racism, Fang. Japan's just started to realize how precious our environment is and is cracking down on those who willingly despoil it.
• Green Queen

• Oh, get real. The corps own Japan, just like everyplace else. They care about the environment exactly as much as it's profitable to. None of the other Japanese megas got hit with any fines by MITI, and they're just as dirty as Yamatetsu. Fang's right; it smells like harassment to me.
• AAAbacus
"Count on me."

When an emergency meeting of the Yamatetsu board was called this morning, it was widely expected that Shibanokuji would tender his resignation as chairman. Instead, he proposed an immediate relocation of the company's headquarters from Kyoto to Vladivostok, his own home. He also proposed relocating most of the corporation's physical assets off Japanese soil to what he called "a more receptive economic climate." In a surprise decision, the board of directors backed this unorthodox proposal.

In a statement to the press shortly after the decision, Shibanokuji stated that the move would mark the beginning of a "new era" for the megacorporate giant, accusing Yamatetsu's previous management of "knuckling under to the Japanese government's blatantly racist agenda." Officials from the Ministry of Trade dismissed these allegations as "ridiculous and unfounded" and stated that they would be investigating the legality of Yamatetsu's proposed move. Yamatetsu CEO Saru Iwano, visibly upset by the board's decision, had no comment.

Global stock markets reacted almost immediately to the news, with Yamatetsu stock taking a sharp plunge of more than 700 points on the Nikkei exchange . . . .

• . . . followed by lots more financial drek, yadda yadda yadda. The point is, one of the Big Eight just jumped ship out of Japan and into Russia. That's going to shake things up a bit, don'cha think?
• Kaptain Krude

• I don't see what the big deal is. So a buncha high-level suits move their desks a few hundred miles. What difference is it gonna make? I still can't throw a rock without hitting one of their subsidiaries, and I live a long way from Japan or Vlad-whatever.
• Dienta

• So ka. These are multinationals we're talking about. Their HQ may be in Kyoto, but we all know the megacorps are pretty much their own countries. The Yamatetsu HQ isn't Japanese territory now, and it isn't going to be Russian territory when they move; it's always Yamatetsu territory. Seems to me the board is making an expensive move with no practical result—which means they're probably up to something.
• Marjorie Morningstar

● Maybe; maybe not. Just because a corp is an extraterritorial entity doesn't mean that the country it calls home doesn't matter. Everything that a corp produces, sells, buys or trades has to get to its destination. Unless the factory that produces a product and the store where it's sold are part of one big corporate complex, that means traveling across national territory. And if the government that owns that territory has reasons to make things difficult for you, they can hit you with anything from tariffs to anti-aircraft fire. Every corp wants a "home base" that will make life as easy as possible for them. That's why some countries (like the UCAS) tend to accumulate a lot of corporate facilities, while others (like Aztlan) don't. The UCAS gummint tends to let businesses do their own thing unless they get rowdy, while Aztlan/Aztechnology will drop the hammer on anything that even smells like competition. Japan falls somewhere in the middle; they'll usually leave their hands off your business as long as you don't buck their system, but as Yamatetsu has so thoughtfully demonstrated, if you work against national interests, they're real good at discouraging you from proceeding.
● Flagman

● Environmental regulations are a real good tactic for controlling a megacorp. There's almost always an environmental offense to be found if you look, because it's almost impossible to contain pollution in your own corporate territory. It also makes the government look good; Joe Sararlman thinks that Tokyo is helping keep the planet clean, when all it's doing is smacking around an uncooperative corp.
● Obie-1

● Plus, there are a lot of corp facilities that aren't considered extraterritorial. Most megas own more than a few subsidiaries that they don't want the world to know about. If Mitsuhama doesn't want the world to know that it owns Sisyphus Systems, Inc., they're not going to declare an SSI research facility as Mitsuhama corporate territory. That means that SSI has to obey the laws of its home country just like any other nonmultinational corp.
● Olympus

● Getting back to the Yamatetsu move, the relocation will definitely affect the corp's sales demographics. Few ordinary people know the details of corporate extraterritoriality, and fewer still care. Your average citizen of Kyoto has always thought of Yamatetsu as a Japanese corporation. His friends who work at Yamatetsu's international HQ may be citizens of the corp rather than of Japan, but they live in Japan, they work in Japan, and they sure as drek look Japanese. Of course they're a Japanese corp, thinks our average citizen, and everything he buys with the Yamatetsu logo is helping build a stronger Japan.

All of a sudden the Big Y is abandoning the country and going to work for those nasty foreigners across the Sea of Japan, and his friends that work at Yamatetsu are either unemployed or whisked away. Do you think he's going to buy any more products from those double-crossing traggers? Now multiply that by a hundred million or so Japanese consumers and you begin to see the potential impact. The other Japanacorps are probably salivating already at the prospect of all that untapped market potential.
● Flagman

● So why is Yamatetsu making the move? They torque off their Japanese consumer base and spend millions moving everybody, and the Russian business they get can't be enough to make up the difference.
● Dierte

● Not in terms of direct consumption of Yamatetsu products by Russian consumers, no. But look at this from the Russian government's perspective. Not only does Yamatetsu bring in a lot of local jobs and a big dose of additional tax income, but pulling away one of the Big Eight from Japan is a major boost for Vladivostok's reputation. You think a few other companies will start looking into what makes Vladivostok such a great place to do business? Not to mention the other corps putting in local offices to keep an eye on what Yamatetsu is up to? Now, do you think that boost in income might make Russia a little more willing to accommodate some of Yamatetsu's requests for special treatment, zoning exemptions, legal loopholes and so on?
● Flagman

● I don't think it's just the money. No matter how helpful the Russians are, Yamatetsu's still going to lose a lot of cash, and their stock is gonna drop. Hey, maybe that's what Shibanokuji is after, trying to drive down the stock price so he can take control of the corp? Or maybe someone else is leaning on him to frag up the stock, get the corp ready for a hostile takeover?
● Bitterfly

● Could be, though that plot doesn't feel right to me. The board of directors has been fighting for a long time over Yamatetsu's meta-friendly policies; maybe the pro-meta faction got together enough clout to get out of Japan to someplace less racist. I'm told there's a lot of metahumans in Vladivostok, many of them escapees from Japanese persecution. Shibanokuji Jr. is an ork, after all—maybe his vote was enough to swing the change after his old man bought it.
● The Dark Wight

● Whatever the reasons, this move is sure going to shake things up in Japan. Yamatetsu is one of the country's biggest employers, and while I'm sure a lot of other corps will be trying to fill the void, things are going to be unstable for quite a while. Add that to the fact that a lot of other Pacific Rim countries are trying to steal Japan's space in the spotlight, and life in the Far East is likely to become a whole lot more interesting. And you all know what that means—more nuyen coming into the shadows for you and me.
● Kaptain Krude

WHAT'S GOING DOWN

For more than fifty years, the Japanese have dominated the megacorporate world. Five of the Big Eight megacorps (Fuchi, Mitsuhama, Renraku, Shiawase and Yamatetsu) are based in Japan, and the management techniques that got them to that exalted position have set the standard for other corporations to follow. Companies based in the UCAS and Europe have been able to hold their own economically, but most corporations in other Pacific Rim nations have been stamped out or snapped up by the Japanese megas before they reach significant size. The surviving independent Pacific Rim corps, led by Wuxing of Hong Kong and Tan Tien of China, have formed a so-called Pacific Prosperity Group to attempt to break the Japanese strangle hold on that part of the world. Other corporations have tried before to break the pattern of Japanese dominance, and this attempt also seemed doomed to failure. But when Yamatetsu itself abandoned Japan and joined the PPG, the Japanese movers and shakers began to take the issue very seriously indeed.

This section details the boardroom struggles that drive Yamatetsu out of Japan and lead it to set up a new corporate headquarters in Vladivostok, Russia. It also describes the background of the Pacific Prosperity Group, a new organization of corporations formed to oppose Japan's economic dominance of the Pacific Rim.

PACIFIC PROSPERITY GROUP HISTORY

While Japan is the largest player in the economy of the Pacific, it is by no means the only one. Corporations from Taiwan, Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Thailand, the Chinese nation-states and others have been struggling to carve out their own niche in the fast-growing Pacific Rim in a tightly contested battle for second place behind the Japanese corporations. Several times in the past, one group or another has attempted to form these disparate companies into a unified force capable of withstanding the might of the Japanacorps, but none of them has yet succeeded. Perhaps the best known of these corporate mavericks was Wu Kuan-Lai, the founder of Hong Kong's Wuxing, Inc. During Hong Kong's push for independence in 2015, Kuan-Lai was a major force in forming the Hong Kong Corporate Directorate, which eventually evolved into the government of the Hong Kong Free Enterprise Zone. None of the corporations wanted to continue under the stifling Chinese regime, and they all agreed that a corporate administration would be much more beneficial to their respective bottom lines. Forging alliances with most of Hong Kong's corporate leaders, Kuan-Lai was able to build a corporate council strong enough to withstand China's attempts to reclaim control of the colony.

Kuan-Lai's ambition didn't stop with Hong Kong's independence, however. With the Chinese out of the way, he was able to build Wuxing into a full-fledged megacorporation, albeit a small one. The company's further growth was stunted by another limiting factor—the Japanese megacorps. While they lacked the political or military strangle hold that China enjoyed over Hong Kong, Fuchi, Mitsuhama, Renraku and Shiawase so dominated the region that any business transaction of significant size by necessity passed through one or more of their subsidiaries. There was no organized oligopoly or Japanese "master plan," but the sheer size

of the Japanacorps made it virtually impossible to conduct business without involving them on some level.

Wu Kuan-Lai decided that the Japanese dominance, like the Chinese control of Hong Kong, was an unnecessary and unacceptable impediment to his company's future. Aware that any one of the AAA megacorps could crush his company with very little effort, he began feeling out his business contacts about forming some sort of unified group that would let non-Japanese corporations function effectively in the Pacific. Most corporations were decidedly nervous about facing down the Japanese directly, though many did stand behind Wuxing's early efforts to level the Pacific playing field. While progress was slow and difficult, the 2020s saw Wuxing and company able to function with an increasing degree of independence and financial success.

The Crash of '29 put an end to that minimal progress. While every business on Earth suffered from the effects of the Crash, the megacorporations had the resources to ride out the storm much more easily than their smaller competitors. Wuxing survived the Crash in relatively good financial shape, but most of its allies were too concerned with staying solvent to worry about opposing the Japanese. Wu Kuan-Lai died in 2039 without ever seeing his dreams of a free Pacific come to fruition.

Wu Lung-Wai, Kuan-Lai's son and successor, was determined to revive his father's plans. With a massive influx of capital in the form of a bequest from Dunkelzahn, Wuxing gained enough economic clout to make the so-called Pacific Prosperity Group a reality once more. Joining forces with second- and third-tier megacorporations from throughout the Pacific, Lung-Wai began to assemble a potent business alliance that could cause trouble for the Japanese megacorps. When they work together efficiently, the members of the PPG nearly match Yamatetsu or Shiawase for influence, though they certainly cannot compete with the entire slate of Japanese AAA megacorps. The only thing that could swing the balance in their favor was for a AAA corp to join forces with the PPG.

The free-spirit known as Buttercup approached Wuxing and the other potential PPG members in January of 2059, shortly after Tadamako Shibanokuji suffered his stroke. Already anticipating the moves that would be necessary to sustain her vision for Yamatetsu's future, she tempted the PPG with the potential inherent in support from a mega. Over several months of negotiations, Buttercup eloquently won their hearts with descriptions of reaching a dream that they all shared but only could expect to fulfill if they pulled together. She stunned all the potential members with Yamatetsu's decision to relocate to Vladivostok, and this action became the PPG's rallying point. Within two months, the PPG became a reality. On July 8, 2059, Yamatetsu, Wuxing, Tan Tien, Eastern Tiger, Kwonsham Industries, Malaysian Independent Bank, Shibata Construction and Engineering, Lami Look Pagkaon and PacRim Communications Unlimited joined together to found the PPG. In September, two NAN corps, Universal Omnitech and Gaearronics, joined the PPG, along with a dozen smaller companies.

YAMATETSU HISTORY

Yamatetsu Corporation was formed in late 2032, when a dozen large Japanese and Filipino companies merged together in a collective attempt to stave off absorption by Fuchi or Mitsuhama. The core companies were strong in the fields of computers, electronics, cybernetics and military engineering, and the newly formed conglomerate also had a solid infrastructure of shipping companies and financial concerns. Careful selection of partner businesses and the acquisition of certain smaller companies gave Yamatetsu strong production and distribution channels, thus forming a corporate empire with all the basic components of a successful megacorporation. Despite an initial period of discomfort as the individual corporate heads became accustomed to working together, Yamatetsu was in an excellent position to capitalize on worldwide conflicts in the 2030s, having developed an impressive series of military electronics advances. Yamatetsu grew at a prodigious rate and broke into the first tier of megacorporations in 2042, though not without strong resistance from the four existing Japanese AAA megacorps.

During the 2040s, the Japanese founders of Yamatetsu began to gradually squeeze out the Filipino influence on the board. While the initial founding corporations were roughly evenly divided between Japan and the Philippines, careful stock maneuvering gave the Japanese interests a virtual lock on the board of directors. Several Filipino board members remain—notably Ramon Dizon, the head of Yamatetsu Australasia—but most have been bought out or control so small a percentage of stock as to be a nonfactor. This helps to explain why a Philippines-founded megacorporation maintains very little actual presence in the islands today.

In fact, the Philippines are one of the only places where Yamatetsu has no official corporate presence. With its fingers in fields as diverse as any megacorporation, Yamatetsu maintains extensive facilities throughout the Americas, Europe, Asia and the Pacific, as well as smaller divisions in India and the Middle East. Unlike many of the Japanese keiretsu, Yamatetsu prefers to let most of its subsidiary companies do business under their own names. The Yamatetsu name lacks the instant recognition factor of Fuchi or Renraku, which sometimes leads observers to believe that the corporation is smaller and less powerful than it really is. While Yamatetsu is publicly one of the quieter members of the first corporate tier, they are ambitious and hungry and have every intention of continuing the spectacular growth that has characterized the company's existence to date.

A Board Divided

Over the years, Yamatetsu Corporation has developed a reputation as the most metahuman-friendly of the AAA megacorps and has spent large sums of nuyen to promote that reputation. Outside Japan, Yamatetsu is indeed meta-friendly, with a significantly larger proportion of metahuman employees than any other megacorp. Within Japan, however, public prejudice against kawaruhito ensures that the company's policies are meta-tolerant at best, and very few metahumans make it into the upper ranks of Yamatetsu's management. Metahumans point to this "macro-glass ceiling" as proof that Yamatetsu's meta-friendly stance runs only skin-deep, while many Japanese humans find even the small number of metahuman managers unpalatable. In short, Yamatetsu is trying to please everyone with its stance on metahumanity, but its watered-down policies wind up alienating as many customers as they entice.

This wishy-washy position results from an ongoing struggle within the Yamatetsu boardroom in Kyoto. The conservative faction of the board, led by CEO Saru Iwano and former chairman Hideo Yoshida, regards the kawaruhito as deformed, sinister beings who have no place in the modern world. Most of the lesser shareholders, at least among those who bother to vote directly on corporate policy, share this traditional Japanese prejudice. The company as a whole is more than willing to exploit the metahuman market, but the majority of the board has no particular interest in seeing metahumans make any significant social progress.

In 2056, a small but growing minority on the board began pushing for reform and scored enough small victories to transform Yamatetsu into a more meta-friendly workplace—at least by Japanese standards. In the past year, the free spirit Buttercup, a significant shareholder in Yamatetsu, began to take a much more active role in Yamatetsu's corporate policy and made it clear that she intended to make Yamatetsu's pro-metahuman reputation a reality. Buttercup found a firm ally for her plans in Senior Vice President Newton Chin (whose younger sister, Sophia, is a dwarf), and a number of lesser shareholders also backed her attempts at reform. Perhaps the most surprising element in this progressive faction, however, was the increasingly frequent voting support it received from once-conservative chairman Tadamako Shibanokuji.

The generally accepted explanation for Shibanokuji's "change of heart" was a purely economic one—that he saw metahumanity as merely a large, unexploited niche market. Others pointed to Shibanokuji's advancing age (he recently celebrated his eighty-fourth birthday) and suggested that senility finally had begun to overtake him, though his mind seemed as sharp as ever in all other aspects of his work. Still other rumors proposed that Buttercup had begun to exert some unspecified magical influence on the old man, slowly "corrupting" his viewpoint to match hers.

The truth, however, was somewhat more intriguing. In his younger days, Tadamako was a division manager for his father's shipping company, Tsuruga International, a thriving business with port facilities throughout the Pacific. Shortly after the turn of the century, when Tadamako was overseeing the reorganization of Tsuruga's Russian division, he set up a base of operations in Vladivostok, where he fell in love with a local woman, a port official named Tatiana Trigorin, and made her his wife. In 2011, the Lone Eagle incident and increasing military tension made the city an uncomfortable place to live, so the young couple returned to Kyoto.

Tsuruga was becoming an increasingly powerful company, and the family lived a comfortable and pleasant life until 2021, when the birth pangs of UGE wracked the world. Millions of people from all walks of life found themselves transforming into orks and trolls—and Yuri Shibanokuji, age two, was one of them. At the time of his son's change, Tadamako was in the midst of a battle for control of Tsuruga's board in the wake of his father's death, and the presence of a kawaruhito in his family meant one more piece of ammunition that his enemies could use against him. He wouldn't let his son be taken to the newly formed kawaruhito camps, but neither could he leave the boy exposed to his corporate enemies and the virulent racism sweeping Japan. Regretfully, he sent Yuri back to Russia with his mother as soon as he had recovered enough to travel, hoping that he could return home when Japan came to its senses. Tatiana, furious at what she saw as Tadamako's weakness in refusing to defend his family, never spoke directly to Tadamako again. Their divorce, finalized some three years later, was a mere formality.

Tadamako never spoke of his son's change to anyone; his friends knew that Yuri had moved to Russia with Tatiana, but Tadamako never revealed any more than that. He swore never to let his son's condition interfere with his business decisions, and when racial issues came before the board, he often overcompensated by casting anti-metahuman votes to prove to himself that his conscience was clear. As he grew older, Tadamako's guilt over abandoning his son in the interests of business gnawed at him. He recently began to help the pro-metahuman faction of the board, subtly at first and then more openly, hoping to somehow make amends and perhaps one day be able to publicly acknowledge his son.

Buttercup discovered Yuri's secret several years ago and set her agents to observing the young man, for she always believed that Yuri could have a significant impact on the future of Yamatetsu and did her best to ensure that his influence worked in her favor.

The Big Move

Unfortunately, Tadamako Shibanokuji never got to properly introduce his goblinized son to Yamatetsu as he hoped. On January 7, 2059, Tadamako suffered a debilitating left brain stroke, rendering him speechless and completely incapable of participating in the day-to-day operations of Yamatetsu. Under the terms of Tadamako's living will, his stock in Yamatetsu was to be voted by CEO Saru Iwano, giving the anti-metahuman faction an effective lock on the board of directors for the duration of Tadamako's incapacitation. Iwano and company began using their control of Shibanokuji's votes to cement their hold on the board of directors, beginning by voting Hideo Yoshida back in as chairman of the board, where he began bringing the corporation's policy more in line with the mainstream Japanese view of metahumanity.

Tadamako died in the hospital six weeks later without recovering his power of speech, and ownership of his shares reverted to his son Yuri. Most of the directors, at first shocked to discover that Tadamako's heir was an ork, automatically assumed that Yuri would sell the shares to them and retire on the proceeds. Contrary to the board's expectations, Yuri chose to keep his father's shares, return to Kyoto and take his place on the board of directors—despite increasingly blatant threats from the rest of the board if he followed through with this apparent whim. Yuri also controlled his mother's voting shares, and Buttercup spent several weeks quietly buying out a number of lesser shareholders in the weeks following Tadamako's death. This voting block, combined with the surprise of his arrival, enabled Yuri to reclaim his father's seat as chairman—an audacious act that outraged most of the Yamaretsu board as well as MITI, the Japanese ministry of trade. Obscure environmental regulations suddenly began to be strictly enforced at Yamaretsu plants throughout Japan, and what should have been routine audits of the corporate books became nightmarish exer-

cises in accounting for every last nuyen. Though the government never explicitly stated its position, it became fairly obvious that MITI intended to continue punishing Yamatetsu until they no longer had a kawaruhito at the company's helm. Fuchi, Mitsuhama, Renraku and Shiawase seized the opportunity to solidify their own power bases in Japan, and Yamatetsu's stock prices plummeted. By the end of April, it became clear that if Yuri Shibanokuji continued to cling stubbornly to the chairman's seat, he would destroy Yamatetsu—if the corporation didn't manage to destroy him first. At least two board members sold their shares and retired, unwilling to go down with what appeared to be a doomed corporate ship; Iwano snapped up their shares, striving to gather enough voting power to oust Yuri. On May 3, Yuri barely survived an attempt on his life, and the following day he called an emergency board meeting. Most of the board expected to receive Yuri's resignation, but instead, he laid a pivotal motion before the board: the proposed relocation of Yamatetsu's corporate headquarters from Kyoto, Japan, to his own home of Vladivostok, Russia.

Even Yuri's supporters refused to back such a radical notion, and the plan seemed doomed to failure until Buttercup took the podium. For twenty-five eloquent minutes, she spoke of the equality of all metahumanity, Japan's betrayal of its own people, and the opportunity for Yamatetsu to be at the vanguard of a step into a better world. As her argument, she produced a staggering collection of proxies from virtually every minority shareholder in the Yamatetsu empire, all in favor of the move to Vladivostok. The proxies totaled nearly a quarter of Yamatetsu's available stock; combined with Buttercup's and Yuri's shares, they added up to more than 50 percent of all voting shares. As the boardroom sat in stunned, unbelieving silence, the motion for pulling the corporate headquarters out of Japan passed.

Fall of the Rising Sun

As soon as Yamatetsu announced its departure from Japan, the corporation's stock price plunged further and Buttercup played her trump card. With the financial backing of the nascent Pacific Prosperity Group and her own immense fortune, the anima bought up all available publicly traded shares of Yamatetsu stock, a buyout that gave her personal control of some 37 percent of the corporation. This coup means that as long as Buttercup and Yuri Shibanokuji vote together, they control Yamatetsu, though because Shibanokuji and Buttercup make no effort to remove him, Saru Iwano remains as Yamatetsu's president and CEO. At the same time that Yamatetsu began relocating its headquarters to Vladivostok, virtually all of Yamatetsu's office and professional buildings in Japan began emptying out as various departments relocated to Vladivostok, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taipei and other Pacific Rim ports.

In July of 2059, Fuchi Corporate Court justice David Hague died under mysterious circumstances in Seattle (see **Death of a Megacorp,** p. 25). Too torn by internal dissension to push strongly for a replacement, Fuchi effectively left the election of a new justice wide-open, which caused even more than the usual amount of corporate wrangling, deal making and backbiting. No one wanted any of the corporations that already sat two justices (Ares, Mitsuhama and Saeder-Krupp) to get a third; Fuchi and Renraku were so busy dragging each other down that they both failed to seize the chance to win another seat; and the rest of the Court viewed Yamatetsu as too unstable after its move to warrant a seat, which left Shiawase and Aztechnology as the only solid contenders. Other considerations still remained, however; no one wanted Aztechnology to gain any more power on the Court, and the non-Japanese corps wanted to avoid giving the Japanese corporate bloc any more power when their economy was so unstable. When the dust settled, Li Feng, an audacious young corporate attorney from Wuxing, sat on the Court as the newest justice. A compromise choice suggested by Yamatetsu, all sides accepted Li because they believed they could readily manipulate the newcomer due to his inexperience. Whatever his ability, his presence on the Court automatically elevated Wuxing to AAA megacorp status.

With Wuxing joining the Big (now) Nine and Yamatetsu shifting sides in their favor, the freshly born PPG has already achieved serious economic clout. Other Pacific Rim companies flock to join, and by the end of 2059 the balance of power in the Pacific has shifted significantly in favor of the PPG. With Fuchi effectively out of existence and Renraku suffering from numerous setbacks, the Japanese economy begins sliding further into recession.

Ironically, Yamatetsu's departure from Japan leaves that country's metahumans in an even worse position than before. The one major employer who was most willing to hire them has now essentially disappeared, and the generally below-average incomes of the metahumans means that they are hit even harder than humans by the country's economic downturn. Furthermore, public opinion blames the metas for driving Yamatetsu to foreign shores. Racial violence in Japan spikes sharply in the six months after the move to Vladivostok.

In California, rumors begin to spread that Japan will be withdrawing some of its troops from San Francisco to help maintain peace at home. Responding to perceived Japanese weakness, activity by anti-occupation resistance groups picks up significantly in late 2059 and early 2060. The troop movements, however, don't materialize.

Smaller corporations struggle to buy out those Yamatetsu subsidiaries that will be difficult or expensive to relocate. MCT and Shiawase also take advantage of Yamatetsu's departure by expanding into markets left vacant by the megacorp's absence. Over time, these measures begin reducing unemployment and stabilizing the economy. Japan holds on to its position as the most powerful single nation in the Pacific, but it no longer enjoys near-total dominance.

THE PLAYERS

This section describes the major corporate players in the Pacific Rim clash, as well as some significant individuals within each corporation. Those corporations and individuals likely to affect events in Seattle receive special emphasis. While the characters may never interact directly with any of these entities, it is important for the gamemaster to thoroughly understand what motivates these parties in their various conflicts.

EASTERN TIGER CORPORATION

President/CEO: Se-Jong Lee
Headquarters: Pusan, Korea

Business Profile:

Unified Korea's largest single corporation, Eastern Tiger is built on a strong foundation of petrochemical and heavy manufacturing companies. Since 2050, the company has expanded rapidly, opening divisions in Australia, Brunei, the Salish-Shidhe Council, Seattle and Hawai'i. It also has diversified its business interests into biotechnology, entertainment, consumer goods, agriculture and other fields. Se-Jong Lee has developed a reputation as a shrewd but cautious businessman, swift to seize an opportunity but sometimes too quick to cut and run if the situation turns sour. Under his leadership, ETC has become a nominal member of the Pacific Prosperity Group, but Lee has offered the organization little more than lip service. If competition against the Japanese megacorps gets too fierce, many corp-watchers suspect that ETC will quietly back out of the organization. However, Lee also bears grudges against Renraku and MCT, which have foiled a number of his expansion plans in the past, and may be willing to take bigger risks in order to see his rivals suffer. ETC's Seattle division is headed by Yong-Jo Moon, a nephew of Lee's who shares his uncle's cautious nature. Though the company's trucks recently have been the target of numerous attacks by the Red Rovers go-gang, Lee has flatly denied Moon's requests to hire additional security personnel. Lee thinks that Moon must learn to operate with the resources on hand, and he is worried that the attacks are merely a diversion for something more insidious. Moon is considering turning to the shadows for additional muscle but has not had the courage to do so yet.

FEDERATED BOEING

President/CEO: Jessica Sirianni
Headquarters: Seattle, UCAS

Business Profile:

Fed-Boeing is the only UCAS corporation of significant size to express interest in joining the Pacific Prosperity Group, apparently viewing the PPG as a way to repay Mitsuhama for its numerous attempts to take over the company.

Fed-Boeing has large plants in Vladivostok, Malaysia, Indonesia and many other places where they were able to buy existing aerospace facilities or allowed to take advantage of natural mineral deposits, in the Pacific or elsewhere. Many of the Pacific Rim nations that serve as homes to Fed-Boeing plants feel that the company has been particularly ruthless in exploiting their land, their people and in some cases their government, and have not exactly welcomed Fed-Boeing with open arms. Despite these misgivings, the PPG sees Fed-Boeing as a potentially useful ally, and while the corporation has not officially been offered membership, the PPG is more than willing to accept any aid that Fed-Boeing has to offer.

Jessica Sirianni

Sirianni is a self-made woman who has developed a reputation for ruthlessness in both her business and personal dealings. She took the company's helm in late 2057 after a protracted power struggle with former CEO William Vogel. While not all of her underlings like her personally, most will readily agree that she can keep the corporation lean and profitable.

Sirianni has connections with a wide variety of shady individuals, and some of these relationships predate her career with Fed-Boeing. Though few of her coworkers know about it, she was born a squatter in Boise, the poorest part of Auburn. As a child, she watched the planes and helicopters flying to and from the Federated Boeing plant in Auburn and swore to one day fly one. From stolen books and compassionate local teachers, Sirianni taught herself enough to get into Seattle Central Community College. Paying her own way through college with jobs legal and otherwise, she learned quickly and eventually earned an aerospace engineering degree from the University of Washington. Joining Fed-Boeing as a draftswoman, she worked her way up to become director of aircraft weaponry, director of Auburn operations, and now the company's president and CEO. She is a hands-on manager who is not afraid to break the rules if it will benefit herself or her company.

KWONSHAM INDUSTRIES

President: Jae-Myung Kim
Headquarters: Pyongyang, Korea

Business Profile:

Kwonsham was formed in 2006 during the flood of corporate buyouts that followed in the wake of the Korean reunification. The newly privatized companies of what was formerly North Korea were being snapped up left and right by South Korean interests and foreign megacorporations. The interests of mutual survival prompted a dozen of the larger "orphans" to band together into the Kwon Sham Group. A combination of luck and business acumen enabled them to survive the buyout craze in good financial health and even take over some of their smaller rivals themselves. Today, the renamed Kwonsham Industries is one of Unified Korea's largest employers, producing products in a wide variety of industrial, electronic and agricultural fields.

The corporation has had few opportunities for expansion outside Korea, which is why President Jae-Myung Kim has wholeheartedly embraced the Pacific Prosperity Group. An affable man in his early fifties, Kim wants to build Kwonsham into a multinational corporation before handing it over to his son, and he has made numerous recent trips to Seattle to lay the groundwork for a UCAS-based transportation division. Rumors indicate that he also met with representatives of the Choson Seoulpa Ring during several of these visits, but no hard evidence has emerged to support these claims.

MONOBE INTERNATIONAL

President/COO: Toshio Mitsukuri
Headquarters: Matsuyama, Japan

Business Profile:

A "double-A" megacorporation with dreams of making the big time, Monobe owns as diverse a web of subsidiaries as any AAA corp. Biotechnology, firearms, cyberdeck components, travel services, genetic engineering and advanced communications research are all elements of Monobe's worldwide corporate empire. The corporation could have made a strong push for first-tier status as far back as 2054, but then-President Sho Kubota was more interested in lining his personal bank accounts than challenging the Big Eight. In January 2059, Chief Operating Officer Toshio Mitsukuri pulled off a vicious coup, getting himself voted in as president and replacing most of the executive officers within a week's time. Kubota shrugged, sold off his stock and headed to Sri Lanka for a decadent retirement. Unfortunately, his private plane disappeared from radar at some point during the flight and he hasn't been heard from since. Mitsukuri never even hinted that he was involved in Kubota's disappearance, but his bloodthirsty reputation preceded him, and the rest of the board has been walking on eggshells since he took power.

Monobe has been busy grabbing whatever scraps it can from Yamatetsu, Renraku and Fuchi, and it is likely to aggressively pursue full AAA status under Mitsukuri's leadership. The Japanese megacorps are still smarting from Yamatetsu's relocation, and if the opportunity arises, are likely to promote Monobe's ascension in order to balance Wuxing's arrival on the Corporate Court.

PACIFIC PROSPERITY GROUP

Chairman: Tzu Cheng
Headquarters: Hong Kong Free Enterprise Zone
Members: Eastern Tiger, Gaeatronics, Kwonsham Industries, Lami Look Pagkaon, Malaysian Independent Bank, PacRim Communications Unlimited, Shibata Construction and Engineering, Tan Tien, Universal Omnitech, Wuxing, Yamatetsu and twelve others.

Business Profile:

In its brief existence to date, the PPG has irrevocably changed the corporate power structure in the world. Backed by two AAA megacorps and their seats on the Corporate Court, the PPG now rivals the Japanacorps in terms of clout and economic strength. The backbone of the PPG has been the Malaysian Independent Bank, which is now nearing the size of the Pacific Rim Bank thanks to PPG support. Clearly, the PPG hopes to see the MIB take over the role that the Pacific Rim Bank has played for many Pac-Rim corps over the years and further the PPG's independence from Japan.

The PPG acts as a coalition body, in a roughly similar fashion to NATO or OPEC in the twentieth century. Any corporation based in a Pacific Rim country (from Siberia to Australia, Athabaskan Council to Chile, and anything in between) and in agreement with the group's charter may petition for membership. Each member corporation has a representative on the PPG's board, and the PPG elects its chairman from this board. The privileges of membership include special rates with the MIB, favored trade status with other PPG corps and certain countries under their influence, and a united front against Japanacorp dominance. In addition, PPG corps have begun several joint projects and research-exchange programs in order to make themselves more competitive with the Japanese. Some of the smaller PPG corps, such as Mangadyne, Polynesian Fuels and Red Wheel Engineering, have already profited greatly.

There also are other perks and responsibilities of membership, from rules of competition to production limitations. Certain areas, such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Vladivostok and Vancouver, are also being developed as PPG-favored centers of commerce.

Tzu Cheng, a gregarious and cunning negotiator from Wuxing, was elected as the first chairman and has performed admirably thus far. He has done a terrific job of balancing the interests of big corps like Yamatetsu with the more numerous smaller corps to everyone's satisfaction.

So far, there have been few internal problems within the PPG. Presently, both Federated Boeing and Lockheed have submitted petitions to join, but their conflicting business interests and Fed-Boeing's rather cavalier attitude toward pillaging Pac-Rim resources have made their membership a contested issue.

PACIFIC RIM BANK AND FINANCIAL SERVICES CORPORATION

President: Endo Kyoji
Headquarters: Tokyo, Japan

Business Profile:

The largest bank in the Pacific, the Pacific Rim Bank finds itself in a somewhat precarious political situation with the rise of the Pacific Prosperity Group. While virtually all major Japanese corporations do business with the PRB, so do most of the larger corporations in China, Korea, Taiwan, Australia, Vietnam and eastern Russia—most of them members of the PPG. As a result, the bank must walk a fine line in order to avoid alienating either faction and losing billions of nuyen in business. So far, the bank has remained steadfastly neutral, despite increasing pressure from the Japanese government and megacorps to charge PPG members more interest and pay them less. However, several PPG member companies are beginning to relocate their financial assets to the Malaysian Independent Bank anyway, and with the Japanese economy continuing to struggle, most observers feel that it will only be a matter of time before the Pacific Rim Bank begins to slant its policies against the PPG.

TAN TIEN, INC.

President/CEO: Sau-kok Chu
Headquarters: Beijing, Republic of China

Business Profile:

Tan Tien is a rarity among corporations in the Chinese nation states—a company that has made an impact outside China without being snapped up by one of the AAA corps. Extremely small by megacorporate standards, Tan Tien barely qualifies as a third-tier megacorp in terms of gross cash flow. However, its researchers have been among the leaders in protein data storage, cranial cyberdeck design and nonintrusive neural interfaces for some years now. While Tan Tien does produce some hardware and bioware directly, most of the company's efforts are focused on pure research, which is then copyrighted and licensed to other megacorps for a handsome profit. Fuchi, Renraku and Mitsuhama have all made takeover bids on the company—more than once, in Renraku's case—in order to keep this profitable research in-house and unavailable to the other corps. Each time, however, the would-be takeover either failed to materialize or was called off at the last minute. Rumors abound as to how the company has maintained its independence, but no hard facts have emerged. From tales of a cadre of "homegrown" otaku who disrupt competitors' stock purchase attempts to stories that the great dragon Lung has some degree of ownership, the rumors grow larger with each failed takeover attempt. The company seems likely to continue to attract attention in the future.

Sau-kok Chu, the enigmatic and reclusive CEO of Tan Tien, is a highly respected business leader in the Chinese Republic, and many larger Chinese corporations use Tan Tien's activities as guidelines for their own. When Chu aligned his company with Wuxing and the Pacific Prosperity Group, several other Chinese corporations followed his lead. Most observers believe that Tan Tien's newest concept, a multi-user cyberdecking interface called Parallel Thought that is barely into the prototype phase, will only be licensed to PPG member companies, and that previous contracts with the Japanese megacorps will not be renewed when they expire. If that turns out to be the case, MCT and Renraku will certainly redouble their efforts to seize control of Tan Tien.

WUXING, INC.

President/CEO: Wu Lung-Wai
Headquarters: Hong Kong Free Enterprise Zone

Business Profile:

In the past two years, Wuxing has embarked on an ambitious and largely successful expansion program, making it the largest and most powerful of Hong Kong's "native" corporations. The catalyst that lifted this third-tier corporation to near-AAA status was a bequest of two hundred million nuyen from Dunkelzahn. The cash influx provided the resources to broaden and deepen Wuxing's involvement in a number of fields, including biochemistry, genetic engineering, agriculture and an extremely diversified consumer goods division. Wuxing also specializes in transportation, information management, diversified agriculture, precious resources and, allegedly, magical research. Dunkelzahn's stamp of approval also acted as a confidence booster for the company and its shareholders, resulting in an even larger influx of investment capital. Shrewd investments and an almost prescient knowledge of market developments has allowed Wuxing to build an impressive corporate empire in a relatively short period of time.

Rumors persist that one or more Triads are deeply involved with Wuxing, but these allegations cannot be substantiated. Attempts to trace the details of Wuxing's cash flow have been consistently stymied by the complexity of the corporation's business structure as well as some sophisticated Matrix defenses. Many observers see these factors alone as proof of Triad involvement in the corporation.

Wu Lung-Wai

Brilliant, charismatic, well-educated and extraordinarily shrewd, Wu Lung-Wai has become one of the most respected—and feared—businessmen in the Pacific Rim. Lung-Wai inherited control of Wuxing from his father but has almost single-handedly built it into a corporate giant well beyond his father's dreams. Several sources report that Lung-Wai appears to be magically

active, but there are no confirmed instances of him actually casting spells or performing other sorcerous activity. He is somewhat of an anachronism in that he prefers to conduct all important business meetings face-to-face, rather than via vidphone or Matrix conferences. Combined with his alleged magical ability, this has led some observers to speculate that Lung-Wai may be some type of "social adept," a physical adept whose talents run to persuasion and influence rather than strength and speed.

Whether the nature of his ability is magical or mundane, Lung-Wai is definitely a force to be reckoned with in the Pacific Rim. Now that he has forged the most powerful corporations from ten countries into a single unified force, "Hong Kong's Kingmaker" seems likely to play an even bigger role in the future of the Pacific.

Sun Running

Sun Running, the head of Wuxing's newly founded Seattle division, has made a career out of being underestimated. A portly, cheerful Chinese man in his late fifties, Running strikes most observers as an oblivious hedonist who cares more about enjoying his decadent lifestyle than making any significant business decisions. Business meetings with him frequently degenerate into late-night drinking and carousing sessions, with bawdy jokes and expensive liquor flowing freely. However, Running has an almost unnatural ability to keep his head about him and will pounce on any moment of weakness or slip of the tongue without hesitation. Few people fall prey to his "good ol' boy" act more than once, but most of his business rivals don't see the intelligence behind the façade until too late.

YAKASHIMA TECHNOLOGIES

President/CEO: Hiroshi Yakashima
Headquarters: Yokohama, Japan

Business Profile:

Renowned for some years as the "hostile-takeover king of Japan," Yakashima has built a compact, efficient corporate empire through a combination of extraordinary insight and dirty tricks. After growing impressively during the early 2050s, Yakashima inherited a substantial sum from Dunkelzahn and appeared to be on the verge of making the big time. However, the company's good fortune attracted unwanted interest from several AAA megacorporations, notably Yamatetsu and Ares, and Yakashima found its own subsidiaries on the wrong end of a series of corporate acquisitions. While able to keep its core businesses intact, the corporation found its opportunities for further growth stunted as it focused on maintaining the company's integrity.

Now that Yamatetsu, its main local rival, is out of the picture, Yakashima has resumed its role as Japan's premier corporate predator. It has already snapped up several Yamatetsu subsidiaries that were undefended due to internal power struggles, and Hiroshi Yakashima seems to have taken particular pleasure in laying off the metahuman workers employed by those companies. The company's PR department has begun to portray Yakashima as fighting a war for human purity, and Japan's human citizens seem to believe it; the company's reputation and stock are as strong as they ever have been.

YAMATETSU CORPORATION

President/CEO: Saru Iwano
Headquarters: Vladivostok, Russian Republic

Business Profile:

Yamatetsu is one of the least well-known of the AAA megacorporations, particularly in the UCAS. The company lacks a distinctive corporate image and seems content to leave it that way, preferring to let its subsidiary companies earn their own reputations rather than feeding off the main corporate rep. This also has its advantages when things go badly for a subsidiary, as image problems rarely reflect badly on Yamatetsu itself. Despite its position as "the other megacorp," Yamatetsu still has a formidable degree of power, particularly in the Pacific and South America.

Buttercup

Buttercup is a free ally spirit, summoned by a powerful magician centuries before the Awakening. She became free some time before the twentieth century and since that time has quietly observed mankind in all its triumphs and foibles. She long believed herself to be far superior to mere humanity, and when she deigned to notice mortals at all she often treated them as pets. Her mortal acquaintances would find themselves rewarded or punished at Buttercup's whim, often without knowing why or even who was behind their sudden good or bad fortune.

With the Awakening, however, supernatural creatures became much more common, and Buttercup found that more and more of them were interfering with "her" humans. Eventually, this led her to a direct conflict with Dunkelzahn, who bound her in an underprivileged ork's body for a year and a day to teach her a harsh lesson about the fundamental equality of all life forms. After sulking for a decade or so, Buttercup realized that Dunkelzahn was right and began working to promote equality among all sentient beings. Under Dunkelzahn's tutelage, she bought shares in several large corporations and increased her investments in those that became the most influential. Yamatetsu has become the most powerful of her investments, and she has spent numerous years observing the activity in the megacorporation's boardroom.

Only with Dunkelzahn's death, however, did she feel compelled to begin acting rather than just watching. She began to push Yamatetsu toward the meta-friendly stance that it now maintains and is doing her best to accelerate the process. She has come to the conclusion that Japan is simply not ready for racial equality and has begun looking for a better base of operations. With Tadamako Shibanokuji's death, she saw an opening and was able to use her far-reaching web of contacts to make her move. While she is usually perceived as a friendly, positive entity, Buttercup is capable of being extremely ruthless when she deems it appropriate.

In human form, Buttercup appears as a petite, pretty Japanese girl. She looks approximately eighteen, with long black hair that she often ties up, and a very expressive face that practically glows when she becomes excited or agitated. Very graceful, she does not walk so much as glide across the floor. She apparently does not feel inhibited by her small stature, often using her three-dimensional movement power to float slightly above the

person to whom she is speaking. She prefers traditional Japanese clothing but has been known to dress in a more modern style. Her known powers include Astral Gateway, Aura Masking, Human Form, Possession, Sorcery and Wealth. In addition, Buttercup may use the Sense Link ally power with anyone who feeds her Karma, and anyone who knows her true name can attempt to use Telepathic Link with her.

Yuri Shibanokuji

Despite his part-Japanese heritage, Yuri is a "true" ork rather than an oni. Though he was born human, Yuri remembers nothing of the time before his goblinization, and has adapted rather well to life as an ork. His late mother raised him with strong morals and a solid education, and the multiracial environment of Vladivostok helped keep Yuri from underestimating himself because of his race. Now approaching his fortieth birthday, Yuri has become the successful owner of a small chain of restaurants and has practiced his business skills by voting the Yamatetsu shares his mother obtained in her divorce from Tadamako. He also inherited his mother's bitterness toward his father; even if he had been invited to join the family business, it is unlikely that he would have accepted his father's peace offering. However, he also inherited his mother's stubbornness; once he inherited Tadamako's shares, he was determined to use them as he saw fit, no matter who tried to get him to sell them and walk away. While he has a good business mind, Yuri is in over his head at Yamatetsu and he knows it. Buttercup and Newton Chin have been his only consistent allies on the board of directors, and he has begun to lean heavily on them in his decision-making process. He feels significantly more comfortable in Vladivostok than in Japan and plans to grow more independent as he becomes more familiar with megacorporate politics. However, neither Buttercup's faction nor the Japanese are likely to benefit from Yuri's independence, and he will have to walk carefully if he plans to survive his first year as chairman.

Jacques Barnard

Barnard is the executive vice president of Yamatetsu North America and the former head of Yamatetsu Seattle. Despite possessing some ability as a hermetic mage himself, he has developed a significant mistrust for any spirits he does not personally control. As a result, Barnard has a long-standing feud with Buttercup and will use underhanded measures to cast Buttercup in a negative light wherever possible. He does not sit on Yamatetsu's board of directors, but he has some degree of influence with those who do. While he now lives in Kyoto, he keeps close tabs on activities in Seattle, his old territory, by way of his former comptroller, Mary Luce. He also has a number of personal contacts in Seattle's shadow community and is not afraid to use them to conduct operations that are outside Yamatetsu's official business channels. Ruthless, determined and efficient, Barnard is a dangerous foe.

Mary Luce

Barnard's successor as head of Yamatetsu Seattle, Luce has almost total control over the corporation's activities in the city. She has maintained and enlarged Barnard's web of shadow con-

tacts, and is one of the most effective users of shadow assets in the entire sprawl. When she finds reliable runners, she often tries to recruit them to join Yamatetsu full-time, as she prefers employees to freelancers except when the job calls for expendable assets. She has also worked hard to bring Yamatetsu up to speed in terms of magical resources, an area where much of the rest of the corporation is lacking. Luce herself is rumored to be an adept of some kind, though no one has been able to state just where her abilities lie. She does not have any particular loyalty to any faction of the Yamatetsu board, though she has inherited some of Barnard's mistrust of Buttercup.

ADVENTURE FRAMEWORKS

This section presents several adventures in an outline format for the gamemaster to develop and use. All of the frameworks draw upon the background material and major characters described in this book.

THE NEEDLE AND THE DAMAGE DONE

Premise

A contact of the runners' main fixer is kidnapped in broad daylight, and he enlists the runners' aid to find her. She turns up a day later, apparently unharmed, but suddenly becomes the prime suspect in the murder of Tadamako Shibanokuji. The runners must get to the bottom of the mystery before she gets convicted—or killed.

Setup

The runners' fixer contacts them with an investigation job. One of his contacts failed to meet with him earlier that day and has, apparently, disappeared. He considers her a punctual and responsible person, and when he checked with her roommate, he found that she had left for the mall earlier that day and never returned. He provides a description of the contact, a woman named Akemi who previously worked as a nurse at a Yamatetsu corporate hospital in Kyoto, and her vehicle.

Event 1

When the runners check, they find her car is still at the mall parking lot, but there is no sign of her at the mall. If the characters ask around, they find a janitor who saw a woman matching Akemi's description getting into a limousine with several tough-looking men in suits. She didn't appear to be resisting, but she did look very nervous, and one of more of the men might have had a gun. He has no idea where the car or Akemi might have gone, and there are apparently no other witnesses. If the runners check her apartment or inquire at the Yamatetsu office she was recently transferred to, they are confronted by investigators from Yamatetsu internal security. They claim that Akemi is wanted for questioning regarding a murder investigation. They will question the runners thoroughly about what they know of her, making it clear that her association with shadowrunners casts further doubts upon her integrity—and makes the runners suspect, too. They will demand names and SIN numbers from the runners and ask them if they have been to Japan in the past year. As long as they are not on Yamatetsu property, however, the runners are not legally compelled to answer their questions.

Event 2

The following morning, the fixer calls the runners. He's found Akemi and wants the runners to check up on her. She's being held at Tacoma's Charity General Hospital, where she was brought after being found unconscious by the side of the road nearby. If they tell him about the Yamatetsu investigators, he wants them to get her out of the hospital before the investigators find her there.

When the runners arrive at the hospital, Akemi is conscious but has no recollection of the previous day's events after someone called her name as she was leaving the mall. Apart from this partial amnesia, she seems physically unharmed, though her purse and credstick are gone. The Yamatetsu squad has called ahead and asked the hospital to hold Akemi there, so the runners will have to either force their way out or sneak out with her. If asked about the Yamatetsu investigators, Akemi states that she was helping care for former Yamatetsu Chairman Tadamako Shibanokuji the night he died several months ago. She recalls seeing Buttercup, who was sitting by Shibanokuji's bedside, look up at her and smile. After that, she seems to have blacked out, and the next thing she recalls is withdrawing a needle from Shibanokuji's arm. She is not sure what she was injecting into him or when Buttercup left. Some twenty minutes later, Shibanokuji went into cardiac arrest, and doctors were unable to save him. She believes that Buttercup may have possessed her or otherwise forced her to kill Shibanokuji and that Yamatetsu somehow found out. Akemi is obviously distraught at the thought that she may have murdered someone. If asked about her sudden distress at something that happened so long ago, Akemi supposes that she had blocked it out of her mind until recently.

In reality, the injection Akemi gave Shibanokuji was just a routine anticoagulant, and Buttercup was not at the hospital the night he died. Conservative elements at Yamatetsu seek to drive a wedge between Buttercup and Yuri Shibanokuji and plan to frame Buttercup for Tadamako's murder. Since Buttercup's opponents had control of Tadamako's shares as long as he was alive but incapacitated, Buttercup had a clear motive for murder: to get the shares, and their votes, into the hands of Yuri, whom she could manipulate more easily. After tracking Akemi to Seattle, Yamatetsu shadow operatives kidnapped her and magically altered her memories of that night so that she would recall Buttercup's presence and then a blackout period. Then a second set of Yamatetsu operatives was sent to seek out Akemi for questioning about Tadamako's death. The evidence would not be enough to convict Akemi or Buttercup of murder, but it will certainly cause Yuri to mistrust Buttercup and fragment their powerful voting block on Yamatetsu's board.

Event 3

The runners and Akemi must find some safe place to hide her as they try to figure out their next move. She is now officially wanted by Lone Star as well as Yamatetsu, and her SIN will trigger alarms at any airport, seaport or border crossing out of Seattle. The false memory spell used on Akemi will not last too long, so the Yamatetsu operatives need to find her and record her confession quickly. In order to find her, they either track down one of the runners and kidnap him or kidnap the fixer. They then contact the run-

ners (forcing the fixer or runner to call, or perhaps the runners try to call the fixer) and threaten to kill him unless Akemi is brought to them. They promise that she will not be harmed, only questioned about the events of the night that Tadamako died. The exchange is to be made at an abandoned warehouse in Puyallup, which suggests that whatever is going on probably isn't part of an official investigation. When the runners arrive at the warehouse, they notice that one of the Yamatetsu operatives is carrying a portacam. The fixer or captive runner is turned over to them, angry but unharmed, and the runners are allowed to remain on the scene if they stay off-camera and don't cause any trouble. With the camera rolling, Akemi is asked about the events of the night in question, and she recounts what happened the way she (falsely) remembers it. The questioner thanks her for her honesty and assures her that she will not be charged if her story of possession is true. Suddenly, a shot rings out, Akemi sprawls to the floor in a spray of blood, and the Yamatetsu agents immediately open fire on the runners. To add realism to their "evidence" against Buttercup, they want their filmed record to show "Buttercup's agents" (i.e., the runners) attacking them in order to rub out the witness and destroy the filmed evidence. One of their own men, standing near the runners, fired at Akemi to set the scene in motion. While most of the Yamatetsu team fights a rearguard action, the cameraman and another operative flee the scene in order to get the "evidence" to Yamatetsu and thence to Yuri Shibanokuji.

Climax

The runners have two opportunities to foil this plot. If they can recover Akemi and escape, her life can still be saved and she will remember the truth about Tadamako's death as soon as the spell has worn off. The Yamatetsu team realizes this and will pursue the runners in an attempt to finish off Akemi. The climactic battle will likely be an attack on the hospital, clinic or safehouse to which the runners take her.

The runners may instead choose to pursue the cameraman in an effort to stop him from getting the "evidence" to Yamatetsu. He was using a short-haul transmitter to send the recording directly to a rigged van stationed nearby, so if the runners take him down they should realize they need to find the recipient of the transmission. In a quick search, the runners will notice a van speeding away from the area. This will result in a midnight chase through the streets of Seattle, with the Yamatetsu team racing to get to their company's headquarters and upload the data to the Yamatetsu mainframe.

Sequels

If the runners are able to prove that Akemi had nothing to do with Shibanokuji's death, Buttercup will make a very public matter of the whole incident, making sure that Yuri and the rest of the corporation know that her enemies were trying to frame her. This is because, of course, Buttercup did have Tadamako Shibanokuji killed, albeit in a much subtler and more indirect manner. The attention brought to the whole Akemi affair may bring the runners some unwanted attention from various factions in Yamatetsu. Their fixer's judgment of them will also depend on how well they performed in protecting him and Akemi.

MAINFRAMED

Premise

The runners are hired to steal the contents of a truck bound for an office building in downtown Seattle. There is a great air of secrecy about the entire move, but various clues hint that the cargo may be computer equipment from Yamatetsu's former headquarters in Kyoto. Predictably, the runners are not the only party interested in the trucks. If they finally do deliver the cargo to their contact, another twist awaits as they find that they and other would-be thieves are being played against one another by their common employer.

Setup

The runners are contacted by a fixer they know and trust, who asks if they're interested in a high-profile job with the potential to significantly boost their reps. If they express an interest, he sets up a meeting with a Ms. Johnson at the Ling Ho oriental restaurant. Johnson, a fortyish Japanese woman, hires the runners to hijack two large crates (3 x 2 x 2 meters) that will be arriving at Pier 27 in approximately 48 hours on a ship called the *Manekko*. The crates will be loaded onto a truck, which will then head for the City Center building in downtown Seattle. The runners should instead bring the crates to another office building on the shores of Green Lake, some eight miles north. It is important that the (unspecified) cargo is not damaged, and also that no one follows the runners to their destination. Guards on the ship and the truck will probably be few in number, but Ms. Johnson expects them to be wary. She offers the runners a reasonably large payment for delivery, with possible bonuses for fast delivery and penalties for damaged cargo.

Perceptive runners may notice a very subtle image of Mitsuhama Computer Technologies' pagoda symbol woven into the fabric of Ms. Johnson's suit. This is actually a hoax; "Ms. Johnson" works for Wuxing and is one of the executives setting up the corporation's new Seattle office. She is trying to find some talented shadow operatives for Wuxing's future needs and has decided to play three groups of runners against one another to find out which has the most potential.

Event 1

Legwork will reveal to the runners that the *Manekko* is an old commercial freighter owned by Tsuruga International, which in turn is owned by Yamatetsu Asia. It is apparently bound for Seattle directly from Osaka. The City Center building is the headquarters of Yamatetsu Seattle and is only seven blocks from the docks, so the runners will need to work fast. Investigation of the Green Lake address will reveal that their destination is the former headquarters of the Haukshorn Chemicals company, now divided up and rented out as office space to smaller companies. Careful research will also reveal that an MCT subsidiary called Optical Industries began renting an office in the Haukshorn towers only last week. Like Ms. Johnson's MCT affiliation, most of this information consists of carefully planted falsehoods. The *Manekko* is owned by Tsuruga International but was hijacked by runners who thought they were working for Renraku. Instead, they too were deceived by Wuxing agents. The hijackers were supposed to bring their

stolen cargo to meet their "Renraku" contact at Wylie's Gala Inn, across the street from the City Center building. Optical Industries is an MCT subsidiary, but they never had an office in the Haukshorn building; Wuxing deckers planted that as a false clue for the runners.

Event 2

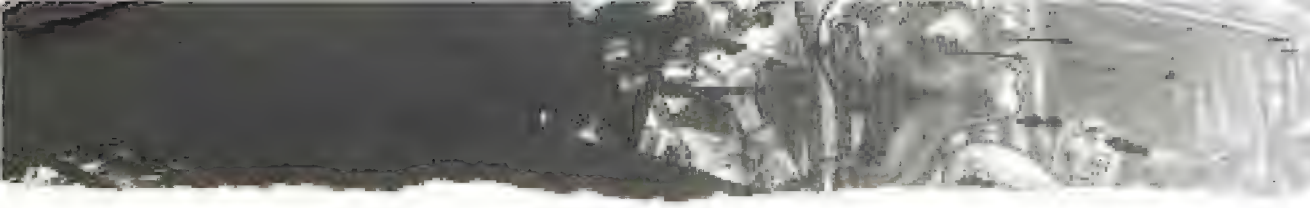
The *Manekko* arrives right on time; at approximately 1700 hours. Several hours pass without incident other than a brief customs inspection, and it's well after dark before the two target crates are off-loaded into an unmarked Ares Roadmaster. A number of "guards" equal to the number of runners, including one mage, escort the vehicle; half ride Honda Viking cycles in front of and behind the truck, while the mage and others ride in the Roadmaster. Perceptive runners may notice that the guards carry silenced weapons and that the uniforms on some are rather ill-fitting—which suggests these are not really the expected corporate guards. If the runners make their move at the docks, they will have to deal with port security. If they prefer to strike on the road, they will have to contend with unpredictable traffic and a very short time frame. In either case, heavy gunfire will attract Lone Star patrols.

The crates themselves are heavy and bear a cargo manifest indicating they are from Yamatetsu's International headquarters in Kyoto. Each crate contains a massive mainframe computer unit capable of running a large and extremely advanced network of Matrix hosts. These could well be part of Yamatetsu's central computer core, though why they would be brought to Seattle is anyone's guess. Actually, they are older mainframes that Yamatetsu no longer needs, sold to Wuxing to serve the latter company's computer needs in Seattle. There is a substantial amount of Yamatetsu data on the mainframes, but it is all at least a year old and none of it is classified or particularly valuable.

Event 3

When the runners are about halfway to their destination, they realize a large group of go-gangers is following them. The gangers, members of the Eye-Fivers, buzz the Roadmaster (or the characters' own vehicles) in a very threatening manner, though they will not attack directly. Their main purpose is to distract the runners so they are surprised by an ambush ahead. An old, decrepit-looking bus will suddenly pull out from a side street (or an on-ramp, if on the highway) to cut the runners off. Inside the bus is another group of runners who are after the *Manekko*'s cargo. The runners must outrun or out-fight these interlopers and get the cargo to the Haukshorn building. If they manage to capture and interrogate one of the rival runners, he will recall that the Johnson who hired them for the run was a fortyish Japanese woman who didn't state her corporate affiliation, but who wore a brooch with a very tiny Shiawase logo on it. The description, if one is given, matches the runners' own Ms. Johnson.

If the runners lose the cargo but manage to tail the team that stole it, they will soon realize that their opposition is heading for the same building where they were supposed to take it themselves.



Climax

Once the cargo arrives safely at the warehouse, Ms. Johnson pays the runners and has her staff begin unloading the crates. If asked about the multiple shadow teams, she will smile and make vague comments about "separating the wheat from the chaff." Suddenly, a team of real Tsuruga operatives arrives on the scene. They were alerted to the fact that their ship was hijacked and have been tracing the cargo via a transponder in one of the crates, only a few steps behind the runners at any point. The runners may have to fend off the Tsuruga goon squad, as well as any survivors of the other two shadow teams who have not yet given up. If given a chance, Ms. Johnson will attempt to smooth everything out, explaining to the Tsuruga men that, thanks to the runners, the hijacked cargo was in fact delivered safely to its intended recipients.

Sequels

About a week later, it will be announced that Wuxing, Inc. has purchased the Haukshorn towers and will be converting them into their Seattle headquarters. Whichever team of runners successfully got the cargo to its destination will almost certainly get future offers of employment from Wuxing, and even those that failed may have work opportunities if they acquitted themselves well.

The first team of runners, who hijacked the *Manekko*, decked into the mainframe while in transit and planted a back door into the system. They or their allies may use it to deck into Wuxing's Seattle system and cause the corp all manner of trouble, or they may sell it on the streets for profit or revenge. In either case, Wuxing will pay handsomely to have someone find and punish the culprits.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Premise

Buttercup has finally managed to locate the one person who knows her true name, an elderly ork named Craig Sanchez. She hires the runners to recover Sanchez so that she may ensure his silence. However, Jacques Barnard, head of Yamatetsu North America, has learned of her search and wants to obtain Sanchez to use as a bargaining chip. And to top things off, the mage that Barnard sends after Sanchez will have his own ideas about what to do with Buttercup's true name.

Setup

In 2033, Buttercup clashed with Dunkelzahn over the fate of one of her "pet" humans. In an effort to teach the spirit humility, Dunkelzahn bound her into the body of a young, uneducated ork for a year and a day, letting her experience firsthand the hardships of life from the victim's side. After the year passed, the ork was given a new identity (Craig Sanchez), a SIN and a sizable trust fund, and allowed to go on about his business. As a result of the binding ritual, he knew Buttercup's true name, but he didn't realize its significance and never mentioned it to anyone.

Though she felt no animosity toward Sanchez, Buttercup was tempted to have him silenced to preserve the secret of her name. She knew nothing of his new identity, however, and would not have dared to take any action against him while Dunkelzahn was alive anyway. In his will, Dunkelzahn left Sanchez a magical pendant designed to defeat Buttercup's attempts to find him. Unfortunately, Sanchez is living out his remaining days in an alcoholic stupor and lost the pendant when he was evicted from his previous apartment. Buttercup was thus able to trace him to Seattle, and she hires the runners to go after him—not to kill him, but to bring him to a secure location where he can spend the rest of his life in peace without the risk of anyone else learning Buttercup's name. Mary Luce, head of Yamatetsu Seattle, notices the request for "nonstandard operatives" and reports it to her superior, Jacques Barnard. Barnard investigates Buttercup's project and decides to go after Sanchez himself on a hunch.

The runners are contacted by Michael Lane, a midlevel executive for Yamatetsu Seattle. Without disclosing his affiliation with Yamatetsu, Lane hires the runners to locate and "acquire" one Craig Sanchez, ork, age thirty-six. The only other information he has is an address in eastern Bellevue, current as of three years ago. Lane offers the runners a sizable reward and tells them to bring Sanchez, alive, to a bus terminal in Renton. He does not mention the fact that there may be others looking for Sanchez.

Event 1

The previous address listed for Sanchez is an old tenement building in Newcastle, Bellevue, ready to be torn down and replaced with a brand-new condoplex. The tenement's manager, an Arabic dwarf named Hamesh, is in the process of packing up his office when the runners arrive. If they ask about Craig Sanchez, Hamesh asks, "You da guys called yesterday?" If the runners say that they are, Hamesh will shake his head and say, "I tol' you already, I dunno where he went." If the runners inquire as to who called yesterday, Hamesh is equally uninformed. "I dunno, some guy askin' about Sanchez. Probably a bill collector or somethin'. Said he'd stop by today."

Regardless of how they answer his question, Hamesh tells the characters that he has no forwarding address or other information for Sanchez. The ork's rent was apparently paid automatically out of a bank account, "which is a good thing, 'cause he didn't have any money but for booze." He says that Sanchez had been told about the sale of the building several times but had apparently made no arrangements to move until the final day when everyone had to leave. "He jus' threw a buncha clothes inna suitcase and walked off down the street, left everything else in the apartment."

Hamesh will not reveal any specifics about Sanchez's bank account, but the runners are welcome to inspect his former apartment if desired. Buried among the plastic liquor bottles, unwashed laundry and take-out food containers, the characters may find a green stone amulet on a broken silver chain. An astral examination of the room will reveal the amulet almost instantly, as it has a moderately strong magical aura. A small shipping box just about the right size for the amulet is on the floor, being used as an ashtray; the return address is for the Draco Foundation. A crumpled letter inside suggests that Sanchez should wear the amulet at all times "to protect against the unlikely possibility that your former guest should bear you any ill will." A pile of unopened mail includes a number of bank statements showing monthly automatic rent payments and numerous other transactions, mostly at liquor stores and fast-food restaurants.

As the runners are leaving the building (or lingering in the apartment, if they take a long time investigating), they will encounter a trio of Yamatetsu company men who are trying to track down Sanchez for Barnard. They will not pay the runners any particular attention if they simply pass on the street, but if the runners act in a suspicious manner or are still in Sanchez's apartment when the enforcers arrive, the Yamatetsu men will confront them. Caldwell, an arrogant mage who acts as the Yamatetsu team's leader, will want to know who the characters are working for and why they're after Sanchez. He will also politely suggest that the runners turn over any evidence they may have found before things get unpleasant. Despite his threats, Caldwell will not start a situation unless his men outnumber the runners. He will, however, follow the runners if he suspects that they know something.

Event 2

Experimenting with the amulet reveals that it masks the wearer's aura. Not only will it conceal the magical abilities of a magician or adept, but it will also make a mundane person's aura appear generic and nondescript. While being worn by a living being, the amulet also masks its own aura.

Matrix searches for Sanchez's name turn up the usual birth records (which are fakes, though very good ones); a few brief arrests during his teen years for loitering, vandalism and the like; and the bequest of "a small token of my esteem" in Dunkelzahn's will. There is also a driver's license photo of Sanchez, which is old but will still allow the runners to recognize him.

Decking into the First Bank of Bellevue, where Sanchez's account is located, reveals that the account was set up in June of 2034, with a deposit of one million nuyen in the account by Libra Holdings, Inc. Sanchez has apparently been living off the interest ever since; automatic rent payments are accounted for, and all other transactions are limited to 100 nuyen per day. Most significantly, two weeks ago the receipt of the rental payments transferred to an apartment building in Redmond.

Unless the characters removed all the bank statements from Sanchez's apartment, a Yamatetsu decker will also be poking around in Sanchez's accounts. The decker (treat as an Equal opponent) will first be concerned with getting Sanchez's current address, then with keeping the player character decker from getting the same information.

Investigations into Libra Holdings will reveal that the company is owned by Cherry Creek Limited, which in turn was owned by Dunkelzahn and is now part of the Draco Foundation.

Event 3

Sanchez's current apartment is even more run-down than the last one, and while it's in one of the more reputable parts of Redmond, it's still not a nice neighborhood. When the runners arrive, Sanchez is out at a liquor store down the block, but he will return roughly five minutes later. If the runners kept the Yamatetsu decker from Sanchez's address, Caldwell will have watcher spirits searching for the runners in the hopes that they found Sanchez. Otherwise, Caldwell's team will arrive shortly after the runners do (or before the runners get there, if the runners dawdle). There are as many company men as there are runners this time, and they are ready for a confrontation if they can't obtain Sanchez peacefully.

Caldwell's team will try to grab Sanchez as soon as they see him coming back down the street; if the runners didn't get a photo of Sanchez, they may not realize who he is until Caldwell goes after him. Sanchez is old and debilitated by years of dependence on alcohol and will provide little resistance to Caldwell's team (or anyone else). Caldwell's primary objective is to lose any pursuers and then get Sanchez to a safehouse in Bellevue.

If the runners get away with Sanchez, Caldwell will track them by car, with watcher spirits, or by any other means necessary. If need be, they will follow the runners to their meet with Lane and gas the whole place with neuro-stun in order to acquire Sanchez.

Event 4

On the way to the safehouse, Caldwell performs a mind probe on Sanchez to learn why Buttercup wants him. When he discovers that the ork knows Buttercup's true name, Caldwell decides to double-cross Barnard and try to bind Buttercup himself. Leaving Sanchez under guard at the safehouse, he moves to a nearby Yamatetsu warehouse and spends the next ten hours preparing a massive hermetic circle and downloading information from Yamatetsu's on-line conjuring library.

The runners should be able to trace Sanchez to the safehouse, whether magically or by following the cars from Sanchez's apartment. If they can get past the guards, they can rescue Sanchez. The ork still has no idea what the whole thing is about, but he knows that Caldwell was trying to find out something about a name, the name of someone that Sanchez used to know. Once they have recovered Sanchez, the runners can turn him over to Lane. However, Caldwell's inquiries in the Yamatetsu conjuring library have triggered Matrix flags that sent a warning to Buttercup. She has had her deckers trace back who was making the inquiries and where they were logged in from, and contacts Lane while he is meeting with the runners. He immediately offers the runners a large bonus to go to the warehouse and stop Caldwell's ritual, as he can't get a Yamatetsu strike team together in time without tipping off Barnard.

Climax

The runners must get past all of Caldwell's guards and summoned spirits in an attempt to stop the binding ritual. Once the preparations are done, the ritual itself is very brief, and the runners will have to work fast in order to reach Caldwell in time. He is a very skilled conjurer, and if he is not interrupted, he actually manages to bind Buttercup. He charges her first of all not to harm or hinder him in any way, and then to stop the runners from attacking him. Obediently, Buttercup sends waves of magical energy out at the runners, who take no damage but hear, quite clearly, a mental voice saying, "Stop attacking and fall down."

If the characters are quick enough to go along with this scam (hey, they stopped attacking, didn't they?), Buttercup will try to distract Caldwell long enough for one of the "unconscious" runners to take a shot at him. If any of the runners continue attacking, Buttercup will hit the stragglers with a real stunball spell or two. If Caldwell survives the surprise attack, he will surely order Buttercup to kill the runners and she will be forced to obey, so they probably only have one shot at taking him out. Buttercup is,

however, on their side, and will try to interpret any future orders so as to help the runners stop Caldwell.

If Caldwell dies and Buttercup is freed again, she will reward the runners with an extra 30,000 nuyen each, but she will require them each to take a dose of Iaés to erase their memories of the ritual (and of her true name). They can also keep Sanchez's amulet if they wish. She then vanishes and takes Sanchez to live out his golden years in a nice condoplex in Singapore. Any runners who manage to avoid or resist the effects of the Iaés may attempt to use or sell their knowledge of Buttercup's true name, but they will earn a powerful, implacable enemy if they do.

Sequels

Jacques Barnard will have a hard time figuring out exactly what happened to Caldwell, and will almost certainly try to track the runners down to get their version of the story. (Of course, due to the Iaés, the runners may not remember much of it.) Buttercup doesn't know anything of Barnard's involvement in the whole incident, and Barnard may try to kill the runners to keep it that way.

Buttercup will probably appreciate the runners' assistance, and may be able to send some more Yamatetsu work their way.

Sanchez's amulet can make any person's aura look nondescript, meaning that a heavily cybered person could use it to appear unaugmented on the astral plane. Treat this as if a Grade 5 initiate with a Magic Rating of 11 were deliberately masking the wearer's aura. Also, treat the amulet as a unique magical item, meaning that it does not require bonding and cannot be dispelled, attacked astrally, or ground through (unless the gamemaster so desires), nor will it stop the wearer from walking through astral barriers. If word gets around about the item, any number of shadowrunners and others might find that ability useful. Of course, shapeshifters and insect spirits might be very interested in its aura-masking abilities as well.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

This section provides additional short adventure ideas involving Yamatetsu and other players involved in the corp's affairs. The gamemaster can flesh out these ideas as short or full-fledged adventures using the material in this book.

ANCIENT CHINESE SECRET, HUH?

Eric Wong, the owner of Seattle's Lee Chee Garden restaurant, has long been rumored to summon and consult with an ancient Chinese ghost. In reality, the "ghost" is the astrally projected form of Sau-kok Chu, the CEO of Tan Tien, Inc. Wong has long been trusted as a neutral party by his many shadowy and corporate customers, who have numerous meetings in his soundproof back room. However, Wong has actually been recording these conversations and using his own extensive web of contacts to ferret out useful shadow information, then passing the data back to Chu.

When Wong is abducted by MCT operatives who have somehow learned of this arrangement, the shadowrunners are hired by his "cousin" (actually another Tan Tien operative) to find and recover him. MCT was originally planning to simply kill Wong, but when they discovered that Sau-kok Chu was Wong's half-brother,

they decided to blackmail Chu into having Tan Tien back out of the PPG. Chu is a very influential businessman in China, and if Tan Tien leaves the PPG, numerous other Chinese corporations may follow.

TRUCK STOP

Yong-jo Moon of Eastern Tiger Corporation hires the runners to find out why the Red Rovers have been attacking his company's convoys and to put a stop to the raids. In addition to legwork, he asks the runners to escort a few convoys, giving them a chance to confront the Rovers directly. The gangers have not been hired by anyone, but heard a rumor that the company would soon be taking delivery of a large cache of milspec firearms, which they want for their own use and profit. The rumor has no basis in fact, but was spread by a Mitsuhama operative looking to shut down ETC's Everett manufacturing plant. The gangers want the weaponry so badly that they refuse to believe it doesn't exist, particularly when rival gangs hear the rumor and begin going after ETC's trucks as well. When the runners uncover the Mitsuhama plot, Moon will ask them to plant fake evidence among the gangers that it was a rumor to distract them from the real target: Mitsuhama convoys of milspec gear.

MOB CLASH

Yamatetsu's relocation has greatly increased trade between Tacoma and its sister city of Vladivostok, both legal and illicit. The Russian community in Tacoma has become larger and more significant, as have the activities of the Vory v Zakone, the Russian mob. Dmitri Makaroff, Tacoma's Vory boss or tzar, has learned of yakuza oyabun Hanzo Shotozumi's plans to form his own independent league of yakuza.

Makaroff is trying to obtain proof of Shotozumi's plans so that he can blackmail the oyabun into letting the Vory take over choice portions of the yakuza's Tacoma operations. Shotozumi, in turn, is trying to foil these investigations and/or find something to hold over Makaroff's head to keep him quiet. Both parties will be doing much of their work through freelancers, as neither wants to involve their parent syndicates in what could become a second bloody mob war. Both mobs will be hiring runners for kidnappings, breaking and entering, matrix raids, surveillance, bodyguard work, infiltration and more.

Eventually, Shotozumi does break away from the Japanese Watada-rengo, forming his own Shotozumi-rengo. This ends Makaroff's blackmail attempts but provides him with an opportunity to ally himself with Shotozumi's new enemies.

TOME RAIDERS

When two Triad members suffer sudden, horrible deaths, Octagon Triad leader David Gao becomes worried. He realizes that their deaths were caused by breaking their initiation oaths and betraying the Triad in some way. He hires the runners to investigate what the two men were up to and how they betrayed him.

When the runners investigate, they find surveillance camera footage in one victim's apartment that shows him being magically interrogated by two elves. When they track down the elves, they find a whole group preparing for a run. The elves are in fact Mystic Crusaders for the Atlantean Foundation and are planning on stealing a scroll from a man named Chao Su-Cheng. Chao is a geomancer in the employ of Wuxing who has been brought to Seattle to oversee the renovation of Wuxing's new corporate offices. He is also a Triad member, in contact with the Octagon Incense Master, the wizard Chen Kwan-Ti. The Crusaders used the Triad members to lure Chao to a fake meeting with Chen, where they were to discuss and study the scroll, a source of geomantic wisdom. If the runners discover this in time, they may be able to help the Triads set a trap for the Crusaders.

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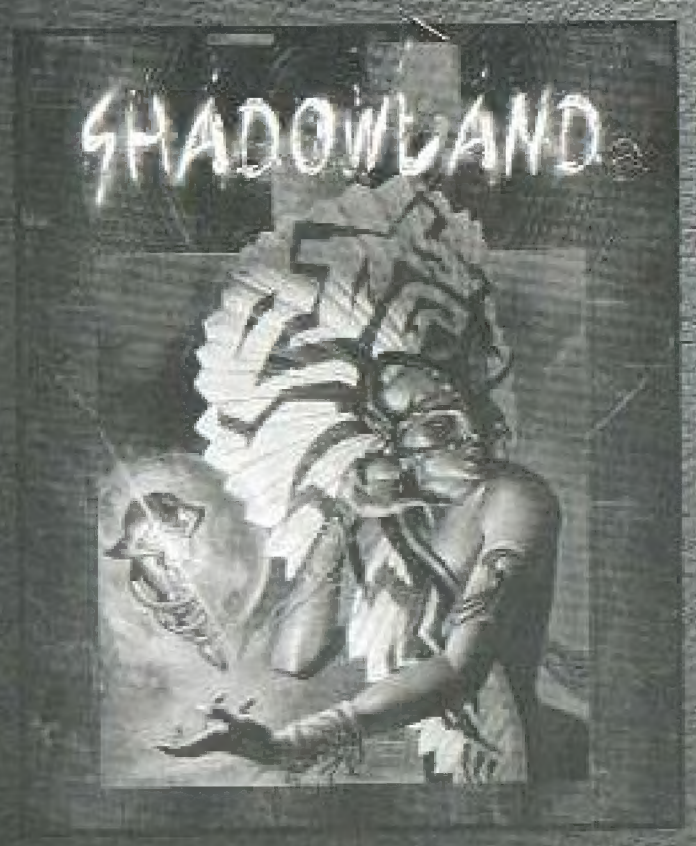

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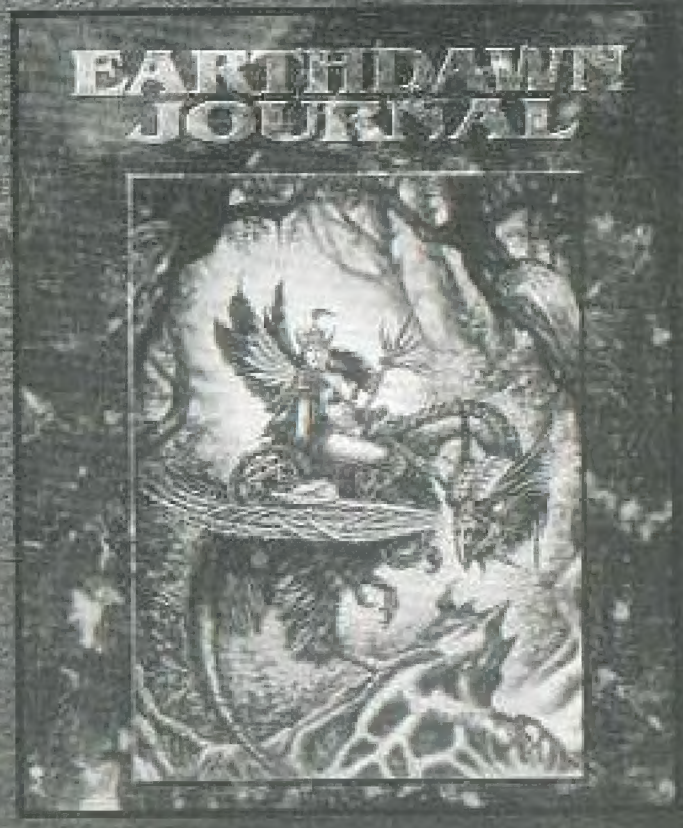

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